

Theatre Australia

Nov/Dec 1976

\$125

EXCLUSIVE

The Minister Speaks on
Government Arts Policy
and the IAC Report

KENN BRODZIAK

The Firm Phoenix?

WOMEN IN

AUSTRALIAN THEATRE

DOBOYAL HEWITT

Plays, Poets and
His Latest Play

More
Canterbury
Tales

Vol 1 No 4

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by Dorothy Hewitt

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directed by Richard Wharmen
designed by Larry Caldwell

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AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL THEATRE MAGAZINE

EDITORIAL

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Theatre Guide

NOVEMBER 1978 DEC

NEW SOUTH WALES:

ACTORS COMPANY (660 2503)

Waiting for Godot by Samuel Beckett
Directed by Michael Edwards (to Nov 18th)

AUSTRALIAN THEATRE

The Proposal by Anton Chekhov directed by George Saut
Baggage Directed by Wolf Mankowitz Directed by Rolf Sefsch (Nov 16th, Dec 17th)

BALMAIN BIJOU (827 3652)

Wonder Women Reg Livermore (continuing)

CAROUSEL (358 2333)

Half Hollywood Bruce Lee (continuing)

ENSEMBLE (929 8877)

California Suite by Neil Simon
Directed by Hylary Gordon (open Nov 18th)

GENESIAN THEATRE (827 3023)

Guiding by Patrick Handley
Directed by Jan Williams (Nov 26th Dec 31st)

HER MAJESTY'S (212 1056)

Private Lives by Noel Coward (to Dec 16th)

HUNTER VALLEY THEATRE COMPANY, Newcastle (28 2626)

A Doll's House (starts mid-Nov)

INDEPENDENT (929 7377)

Refugee Crompton by Ron House Dec White John Neville Andrews Alan Shrimman & Derek Cunningham
Directed by Ross Pedlow (Nov 16th Dec 11th)
For the Boys by Richmond Young (Every Sat afternoon)

KILLARA COFFEE THEATRE

Monstrous A Tribute to Ten Years
Directed by John Howell (continuing)

MARIAN STREET (488 3166)

Parasite Gilbert & Sullivan Music Revue
Directed by Ted Craig (to Dec 22nd)

MINERVA (358 1221)

Saturday Night at the Fox Chelsea Brown (continuing)

MUSIC HALL THEATRE RESTAURANT (908 8222)

The Street at Balgownie Square by Stanley Walsh
Directed by Stanley Walsh (continuing)

NEW ARTS THEATRE, Globe (660 3822)

a Discourse of Benjamin Franklin by Steve J. Spaul
Directed by Richard Wherrett (Starting Gordon Chater (continuing)

NEW THEATRE (518 3403)

Feeling Apart by Morris Menick
Directed by Brian Sykes (to and Dec 1)

NIMROD (89 5003)

Upstairs A Handful of Friends by David Williamson
Directed by John Hall (to Jan 6th)
Downstairs Only Lunch by Tom Stoppard
Directed by Ken Harker (Dec 17th - Jan 19th)

OLD TOTE (663 6122)

Crime Theatre The Seven at Serapisville by Patrick White
Directed by Jim Sharman (to Dec 16th)
Parade Theatre Academy Night by Ben Travers
Directed by Bill Redmond (Nov 24th Jan 11th)

SEYMOUR CENTRE

M.W. Theatre of the Sea, King Lear by William Shakespeare
Directed by Adam Selzer (to Dec 4th)

A.C.T.

CANBERRA REPERTORY SOCIETY (47 4222)

Calamity
Directed by Ross McGregor
Designed by Russell Brown (Nov 26th Dec 16th)

QUEENSLAND

ACTORS THEATRE (369 4026)

At the Conservatorium of Music Theatre
The Miser From by Tene Harrison after Moliere Directed by David Clandinning (Dec 6th - 11th)

ARTS THEATRE (36 2344)

Carousel
Directed by Andrew McKeivley & Robyn Fowler (Nov 26th - Dec 24th)

LA BOITE (36 2296)

How Could You Believe Me When I Said I'd Be Your Valentine When You Knew I'd Burned Your Love
Adapted from Golden by John Bell
Directed by Graeme Johnson (to Dec 11th)

QUEENSLAND THEATRE CO (21 3861)

The Dying Swan by Alan Hoggood
Directed by Murray Fry
Designed by James Redwood (to Dec 11th)

BER

VICTORIA

HER MAJESTY'S

More Canterbury Tales (continuing)

LA MAMA

Crucifixion by Samuel Beckett
Adapted & Directed by Valerie Kneen (to Dec 5th)
20th Century by James Cagney
Directed by James Cagney (to Dec 18th)

LAST LAUGH THEATRE

Crucifixion at the Senoy by Gerrie Hutchinson
Nov. 18th to mid Jan

MELBOURNE THEATRE COMPANY (046 1100)

Russell Street Adapted/played by Mick Rodger
Directed by Mick Rodger
Designed by Tony Triggs (to Dec 11th)

Julius Caesar by Ray Lawler
Directed by John Barnard
Designed by Anne Fraser (Dec 14th - Jan 22nd)

St. Martin's City Sinner by Stephen Pollackoff
Directed by Ian Giles (to Jan 8th)

Great Screen Old Flamingo by E.A. Whithead
Directed by Simon Cheevers (to Dec 11th)

PLAYBOX (034 888)

Badger
Directed & Choreographed by Betty Foulmer
(continuing)

AUSTRALIAN PERFORMING GROUP (347 7130)

From Factory Front Theatre: The Gaddens by John Burnard & John Tumin
Directed by John Burnard (Nov 11th - Dec 24th)
Back Theatre: Sketch of the Imagination by Jack Hibbard
Directed by Paul Hampton (Nov 23rd - Dec 24th)
St. Marks Hall: The Young Peter Spies (Nov 18th - Dec 24th)

ST. MARKS HALL

Peter Spies by Harold Egan (Nov. mid Nov)

WINDSOR REGIS

The Naked Year Show (continuing)

SOUTH AUSTRALIA

HER MAJESTY'S

Same Time Next Year by Morrie Saper
Directed by Gordon Hunt (Nov 26th - Dec 11th)

SOUTH AUSTRALIAN THEATRE COMPANY (01 5151)

Wish adapted by Rodney Fisher
Directed by Rodney Fisher (to Nov 27th)
Major Castings by Michael Cane
Directed by George Ogilvie (Dec 2nd - 18th)

WESTERN AUSTRALIA

HOLE IN THE WALL (01 2403)

The Music by Jean Genet
Directed by Alexander Hay (to Nov 26th or longer)
Mixed Double by Harold Pinter Also
Ayldbourne, James Saunders & others
Directed by John Wilson (open Dec 1st)

PLAYHOUSE (23 3344)

Return Season Nov 2nd - 8th
Armed and Old Dice by Joseph Kesselring
Directed by Anne Neume (opens Nov 18th)

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CURRENCY STILL CURRENT

It looks as though the battle inside Currency-Melbourn Drama is reaching its conclusion and that Currency Press will resume its role as Australia's major drama publisher. At the time of going to press proposals for terms of settlement between Currency Press and its English owned parent Associated Book Publishers (A.B.P.) Pty Ltd had been exchanged. The dispute has inevitably caused delay to several announced titles. *David Williamson's A Mandala* (A.M.P.) due out for the Miro Theatre opening on November 12th, has been completed by A.B.P. with the Currency Press imprint, and *Currency* is now publishing *Day After*, a play picture and story book on transsexual entertainment which concerns Peter Kenna's *Meigs* and *Steve Speer's* *Education of Benjamin Franklin*. This has gone to A.B.P. for printing and will now be published until February. *Alan Duto's* *News and Affairs* published with Louis Bacon's *The Woman Farmer in the Double Hat* series, got through the net just in time and is now available, but his *Melinda Ravens* has been held in limbo as of the printers, together with the Double Hat Richard Muldrew's *Stanzas* and Joseph Moschese's *The Gunride*. These are now expected to be released this month, but there is no news at present of *Alma*

de Groot's first book *Gang Wars and Other Plays* nor the two books by Peter Kenna, *Propaganda's Wolf in Sheep's Clothing* and *Two Plays, Later Closely and Talk to the Moon*.

Meanwhile Currency Press says it has had a good response from potential new partners among Australian publishers and looks forward to announcing the start of a new venture before the end of the year.

ACTORS AND APARTHEID

I have played to racially integrated audiences throughout the whole of South Africa in African and Asian townships such as Soweto and Lenasia and Black Universities such as Tlokweng, and the message given to me a year after time from Zulul and Khomas, from Swaziland and Lesotho, from Calcutta and Johannesburg, is 'keep the plays coming and make sure we can ALL see them'.

For us to imagine we can influence Apartheid policy by refusing to play to any fully integrated South African audience is naive to the point of stupidity (the white audience are very well catered for by home produced shows and plays of high standards) and to limit our choice of authors is to apply our own racist brand of censorship which is itself the ordinary person of South Africa from his flow of ideas thereby limiting the very people we should be trying to help.

Barris Hughes, in response to arguments put forward for a total boycott of South Africa by the cause of Australian-based productions (eg J.C. Superstar) at a public meeting called in Melbourne in support of his proposed black actors John Kani and Winston Ntshona

QUOTES A

SIMON HOPKINSON SPEAKS

Some facts about the Melbourne Theatre Company at Grant Street.

(i) The MTC at Grant Street receive no direct Government subsidy. The Stageco is underwritten by the MTC but its life blood comes from the box office.

(ii) Although audiences have not been as large as hoped for I would suspect that they have a better grasp of what is on at the Prem Factory over the same period.

(iii) The MTC was asked by the Victorian College of the Arts to take the lease of the Grant Street Theatre for eight months in order to help the Victorian College of the Arts raise money for the setting up of the School of Drama.

(iv) The decision to postpone production of Louis Nowra's *Inner Voice* was made on purely financial grounds. To have mounted a play with a cast of eight at that time was a bit over budgetary suicide. As it was *Inner Voice* was replaced by the *Story of a Madman* which was the first MTC production to transfer to the Prem Factory (at the A.P.C.) a request.

(v) The decision to programme *Scouting* was made in consultation between John Sumner, Ray Lawler, Carmel Burns and myself. The decision was made for the following reasons: we wanted to present at least one play which

NIMROD V'S THE TOTE



Paul Ben, the shrewd young twenty four Englishman, recently arrived as General Manager of the National, has wasted little time in assessing the Australian scene. Perhaps prompted by his theatre cover experience of four seasons with its two main classics (*Resolving Officer* and *Duchess of Malfi*) he has come out strongly in favour of indigenous drama and strategy against the policy of the Old Time.

The Tote is living on a diet of European classics and seems to just condescend to Australian plays once a while. If the authors of the I.A.C. report, is to seriously question the half million dollars they get for doing things with style of which - which Nimrod can do for a fifth of that; and I do agents if you could not the strange untheatrical factory at Alexandria will and good.

I am not here to contest but to translate the ideas of Nimrod into reality. Nimrod was started by an Artistic Director who creates the play, but the Board and the Managers. At the Tote there is no continuity mainly because the directors are appointed.

But the managers are appointed (at Nimrod) and Paul Ben found himself (at the most) in a sandwich which has resulted in the resignation of Jane Newby, The Manager who applied for the higher position. His age and experience seem equal to Paul, and he has Australian (at the Tote) experience again.



Dear Sir

Congratulations on your magazine: we have all waited too long. My special thanks for devoting at least a portion to the amateur theatre.

David Goldstein in his article *The Art of Amateur Acting* (I.A.C. p.43) touched on many contentious points very relevant to the amateur theatre. Some of these were neatly covered: logistical problems, actors were generalisations, but some were misstatements: temperance of a malaise - which I submit, grows within actors and an awareness of.

This malaise as I have chosen to call it, is basically the lack of a broad fundamental artistic philosophy. By this is meant, a policy based on a philosophy that has in latest been considered debased and defined by the group or some of it. Let me illustrate from practical experience.

Most groups that I have been in have tacitly assumed (perhaps correctly) that their audiences prefer comedy which I will not define here but use in a broad sense. The result of this is that they go on the basis for comedy, preferably with one box set, about nine characters (at least two of whom need to be women) modern dress and three acts. By this time they may or may not have someone and a half (the floor of course) in which to present the play.

With this play plan, the pattern repeats itself. I realise this is a generalisation.

LETTERS TO

The assumptions implicit in such an approach are exposed with our question. Every one of them is false and is easily countered with images and evidence. (i) The stage is a permanent base, the first play is mounted in four acts with three acts, fully costumed and rehearsed, and women on a stage with no wing space, no flying space and no curtain and no about \$4500-500 to stage - nothing was heard. We had an average 35% capacity over nine nights.

The pattern however is wider than this. Not only must this ad hoc element be overcome by a policy of balanced plays and forward planning but a group must consider what function it is a community is fulfilling.

Is it the function of an amateur group to give the professional theatre, (a) to provide an alternative platform to T.C.P. or T.C. or should it provide a platform as an actor in Plays and Players recently had? Every group must consider such points.

It can do much better than its image needs any away from and it does have advantages that the professional theatre - especially touring professional theatre - does not have. For example the group I am at present recently (and by sunset) that 75% of its audience regard with a wince as the prime factor responsible for their presence at a play.

Therefore every group not only has to plan ahead so that they can choose a programme of related or balanced plays - chosen for their quality, and then attack their problems with imagination, but it must also consider just what it is trying to do with its plays (a) in the community (b) as against T.V. (c) as against professional theatre (d) as against other forms

QUERIES

OUT ON GRANT ST. TROUBLES

was directly concerned with what was happening at the community house, we wanted to give company actors an opportunity to work on something different to at least one production at Grant Street, and we wanted to have at least one production which had been developed from the very start especially for the Grant Street Theatre. There being no scripts available from outside the company which was suitable for the actors who would be involved, realising that already completed the research and finished a scenario for a play about problem drinking (to be named by the 'relevant' President of an Alcoholism and Drug Dependence) we decided that this would be the basis of our fifth production.

[iv] In the weeks of discussion with Simon Chivers, who agreed to direct the production, we decided to modify it for the nature of the original scenario and to attempt to give it more radical in structure and style. Consequently the finished script, presented to the actors at the start of rehearsal, was rather different from the sort of script they had been used to.

It is probable that our initial approach in rehearsal was aimed too much at finding out the weaknesses of the script rather than looking for the strengths. As it was, I completely rewrote the play twice (in daylight) on the basis of discussions with the cast and

a director. After a further two and a half days of work it was obvious that the actors were not confident that they could bring off a finished production in the remaining two weeks of rehearsal. It was decided therefore, in consultation between cast, director, John Sumner and myself that since none would be well served under the circumstances, to postpone *Tapdancing* and to replace it at that time with E.A. Whithead's *Our Flamingo*.

[vii] My decision to leave the company was made before the postponement of *Tapdancing*. I had been employed to direct the season at Grant Street and with the falling up of the last two shows, to co-produce with Hiroshi Productions. This job had come to an end.

Simon Hopkinson

WAGE DISPARITIES?

The Australia Council when advertising last month for an Administrative Officer salary \$16-5388. This is \$294 - \$307 per week. The job description says the person will be responsible for the day to day management of the Council office services and personnel matters. The limited theatre is offering \$1.35 per week to all actors.

I have always assumed that one cannot justify the earnings of people in the arts on commercial grounds, only those wages bearing no relation to ordinary commercial earnings. But we are paid from the same limited Government fund as the Australia Council staff. What proportion of this do they justify in taking?

Pauline, General Manager, Newmarket Theatre

APOLOGY TO ARTS COUNCIL

Since my criticism of the academy painter at the Queensland Arts Council in a review of the *Open and Shut* at the Playhouse I have had an opportunity to talk at length with the Arts Council administrator Mr. Peter Carr and also look through the Council's relevant files.

It is right and proper for me to withdraw the remarks I made in that review. I do hold to me belief that the administration of the Arts in Queensland is so structured as to make it difficult for any small group to gain an effect on the Council, however well intentioned they are. But the Queensland Arts Council does support local and regional activity.

I had evidence suggesting otherwise and that had me to write as I did. I am satisfied that evidence was wrong the stories of persecution which were related to me by people in the North Queensland area apparently applied to another company.

I've realised that the Arts Council was not carrying out a discrimination policy against the *Open and Shut* and I'd like to extend my apologies to them for suggesting it.

Richard Rotheringham

Richard Rotheringham

SHOCKABLE MELBOURNE



Angela Punch, or rather Sydney, is one who has been appearing in the *Gift* at Melbourne's Grant Street Theatre. Has been attacked at the different responses to her nude scenes between Melbourne and Sydney audiences.

The extensive strong evidence says Sydney takes it in its stride while it seems an outrageous thing to Melbourne. (The Melbourne press has been following what her nude appearances are, though it was something since.)

Angela at the beginning appears nude, alive for a while, a speaker in her hand and a chair attached to her bottom, explaining she is a fertility girl for the only other character in the play. She is there to serve his every birthday wish, especially to feed.

Angela first that Melbourne people don't take the right well when they play as a comedy as Sydney people do. There is a word of difference in the reactions: as though on two different worlds.

She also has been critical of the Grant Street theatre, which she means could have a few hundred dollars spent to improve it, especially the roof which plays a tune on a very day.

Audiences were much better in Sydney - more of them for a start she adds.

Stan Marks

THE EDITOR

of entertainment. In other words it should be asking itself continuously a series of questions on its aims and functions and whether these are being achieved. With all the points of group I believe on a pretty fairly simple that I'd like to see well do better given its technical facilities and its success on the other hand, it is a whole lot of work on (Berke) (Purdell) (Berke) (Cheow) (Johannesen) (Peters) (Shelton) (Siegman) on TV, and yet these are all proven entertainers.

In summary then I am saying that many another group need to test themselves out. Until they do they are wasting the vast amounts of time, effort and talent at their command - or if not wasting it then not using it to its fullest and most productive.

If I have exposed many groups of a certain neglect or ignorance, then, if the capital. Let me say however, that I believe that another theatre has an immense job of work to do. It can do it and do well and for one more job in these pushing. I don't believe the professional theatre can do too many of these things and I say so with a lot of my own but they need to be said.

Yours faithfully,
W.F. Gales
Perthshire

Dear Editors,

I was a little dismayed to read in Richard Rotheringham's criticism of *The Department*, his opinion that David Williamson does not pursue radical issues. I think it is not appropriate for a critic to impose his taste in the way so overtly.

Since David Williamson has chosen to

explore bourgeois academe in Australia for what it is and for what it might be, let us examine the play in that context. To my mind Williamson has not failed to present a true picture of his Department and its perhaps this very picture which prompted Richard Rotheringham to ponder radical issues. That, I think, is a pity for the play which Williamson has failed to test us on a theatrical point. He introduced an element of substance at the beginning of Act 1 with the filling of the divided water both barrels, he threw it every untravelling a piece of plot which could have made the play a humdrum, had it been successful.

Simply because it is not ready to consider the bourgeoisie does not mean that an exploration of the middle class is not valid and even better. For instance, one would say of Charles Lamb that he failed to investigate British Imperialism, although he was writing, in essay form, the life of a civil servant at a time when the British were claiming great slices of the world for their empire. The empire has crumbled but Lamb's essays survive as a chronicle of an ordinary Englishman's life experiences both before and after the war of the times in which he lived. If Williamson is to survive his generation, then it will surely be for reasons akin to these.

Best at talk with Theatre Australia

Yours faithfully,
Billy Noonan
New York



Spotlight

Here Gordon Chater is delighted with reception to *The Education of Benjamin Franklin* – especially excellent reviews in *London Evening Standard*. Talk is still going to Melbourne and other states in future.

□

Melbourne's *Rocky Horror Show* is one year old in November. It's attracting crowds to Pinesy's Regent theatre.

□

Believe I.A.C. report has caused some strong views at Australian dinner parties, especially when self-made businessmen have dined with local artists. See the fact the press can't listen. Although one good question asked, but not really answered is if some 'stars' dropped their high, over-inflated salary demands could better and production costs be dropped? After all, how do you evaluate an actor's formal talent?

□

A.B.C.'s *A Power Without Glory* has supporters who are good as some of episodes ... maybe better than some!

□

Private Jones is pushing them in to Melbourne's Comedy Theatre. Says a lot for Melbourne audiences and their taste ... and what the new regime using Melbourne Theatre should look out for.

□

Natalie Miller, who runs Stannard Film Distribution (currently handling *Boyz n the City*), I used to be the Victorian Film Commission, will be going into film production next year. Also later should see other locally made films are also for production. It is fast moving stage where one will have to go to small movie houses to see a foreign production.

□

Jonathan Hardy has taken his *Dury of a Madman* from the Great Theatre to Palm Factory Black Theatre. Interesting thing coming up in the youth world of Mr Hardy is 77. Heir Dury will bring to NSW in future ... needs good theatre theatre.

□

How to hear talented actress Maggie Miller will be making more stage appearances in Melbourne in the near future.

□

So not it opened as new premises, about a year away, Teds and Johns theatre co-located on Melbourne's Exhibition Street, is just as busy as ever. Bookings can go up to eight months ahead. As an English journalist recently wrote – It is one of the best shows in Australia.

□

How A.B.C. will produce new TV series based on adventures of television 77. Casting is currently underway.

□

Sydney is going to take on the Pinesy local. Reg. Preston will be introducing long-legged showgirls in a new form revue in the heart of the Coast, co-located with Stannard's. As a showgirls, and especially *Sally Staines*. Good for tourist trade too.

Graeme Blundell speaks his mind

to Stan Marks



Photo: A.B.C.

Confront the theatre activists, says Graeme Blundell.

After his star Graeme Blundell was getting his mind. And still made good sense.

I had asked him why he was going to stage plays at Melbourne's Great Street Theatre and what he thought about the state of Australia's theatre today.

The Melbourne theatre scene is pretty good. We need more mobility more ideas and producers interacting between state and theatre, more general involvement for the sake of the whole new world.

"There needs to be more trusting. Perhaps the answer is a complete rethinking of the theatre industry here. I go along with Phil Adams' line. Theatre should have to account for their money more. There's been a total lack of programming."

"I know it's all right to have in some sort of judgement. But what the answer is, I'm not sure. There is a element of keeping the total product like with the two new *Power Without Glory* which is the wrong thing to do just for the sake of doing it."

"No, I haven't seen the actual A.B.C. report but there does seem a lot of good stuff included in it. You know, I do think the two new *Power Without Glory* might be a commission theatre can undergo a revival. Hopefully he will enter the genre of moving local shows to larger commercial theatres. We have to put a lot of hope in him."

"The film world? It's okay – but then business isn't allowing the world is down. I think there are eight Australian films due for release within the next future."

But, overall what we need are more co-operative efforts, more groups of people getting together for the sake of the theatre. Waters and producers working together. Melbourne is one with fringe groups, such as out at Melbourne University. They are a great hope. We need more serious, more like night shows – why not a theatrical festival in the heart of Melbourne? It would be great. I am hoping to do some shows at the Last Laugh. It could be quite terrific."

"What else do we need? New collaborations, people from different theatre sets getting together. I think the fact that I am doing some work for John Summer shows something. Maybe he should do some plays at other theatre groups too."

The Great Street venue should be the most exciting theatre in the country if the show was good. But so far, and don't know why it hasn't quite worked that way. I think the collapse of Arts and its demand movement will change the nature of things. We are going to work with them. There is real hope in the demand movement. We are there. We need to develop new directors. Our best actors should be back in the theatre not only in film. Look at the large number of terrific talents in our film from Helen Mirren and Jackie Weaver on ...

"I had the *Dark Trilogy* very exciting and would like to see the film followed with other Australian writers, such as Patrick White."

"Perhaps we need Australia's theatre movements to be co-ordinated. Maybe the Australia Council could do that. A national talent pool in all areas of the theatre."

I do think more and more that people are aware of our theatre problems but not aware how to solve them. But I'm optimistic and the night is beautiful. Would I be sitting on Great Street at home?"

As Great Street we want to do really good plays. I am open to suggestions and of course would like to see works by Australian writers who will be doing *Chatterbox* by Anne de Green and Dorothy Hewett's *The Golden Child*. I'm working with Garry Hutchinson. I think Dorothy Hewett is a remarkable talent."

We expect to get going the second week in December. Phil Adams, Maggie Miller and other well known people will be included. It is an exciting concept we have in mind. I suppose you can say we are really doing these shows because we want to do them. Yes, I do hope to work in Sydney, which is very stimulating and a place I love."

It was evident that Graeme Blundell was concerned and did a great deal of thinking about Australia's theatre.

Gough and Tony Whitlam were the Labor speakers in the debate on the arts submitted to the Australia Council. But Tony Whitlam, while speaking at the usual no-nonsense about how only Labor loved the Arts and how we ought to look with fear and trembling on the Labor vote as being kind enough to say all of the young 'man' who has been made Minister Assisting the Prime Minister on the Arts. At least he's no philistine. When the Whitlams are saying that you know there must be something slightly questionable.

But what of Government cuts? In the last budget the Labor Party had already begun the cuts. We didn't take to the knife first. It was very delicate, and everything we could do to keep a expenditure up to a very healthy level in the Arts. As you know, thousands of grants, and good luck to Labor because they did lavish funds, but so many of the important projects all things had been set on ice in our time. The experimental film area, the film school itself and support for the theatre took back a long way. It's not easy Whitlam would have made and created all this. What I don't want to say is any mean sense at all suggest that they suggest everything, by running the economy—I want to give them credit for the importance which they recognized by levelling money—I just note with sadness that sometimes if you give so much so quickly you create enormous difficulties across the board.

There is going to be, I hope and believe, a serious approach to the Arts in this country. I don't want that to be an area where we play politics. I'd hope that we as members of the parliament and in community to recognize this as an area of national interest and one where party politics can only damage the area.

The I.A.C. Report? You could feel it is a rural that the preliminary report has come out now when it was set up as a Labor initiative. They'll say here it is a bloody Labor the true colours.

The notion that we would consider phasing out subsidy is just not on.

But it was commissioned by the Labor Party when commercial thinking was feasible and this narrow request from one company became the basis for the whole thing. I don't know what happened in between. The I.A.C. was left without a charter without ruling associations as to the value that Government put on the Arts and basic policy instructions and how they could (or be) achieved. It's no wonder that you have a report which many people believe is that set in the context ought to be. If there are questions they come back in the sort of instructions which the I.A.C. were given.

However, I must say I don't mind that the I.A.C. is asking hard questions. I think that's good. What is terribly important is that Government and those of us involved in the Arts should have answers to those questions and be able to state them to the satisfaction of even the hardest heads in the business world.

Perhaps there were some misapprehensions in the evidence given to the I.A.C. but I am absolutely convinced that there are thoroughly responsible arguments in all these areas which can justify subsidy but they do rest on evidence in the end.

You have got to accept values—we support all sorts of industries in this country, not just the Performing Arts, giving the growing all sorts of crops, manufacturing. Indeed, just about everything that moves gets some sort of support from Government. Everyone who sees this sort of support needs to argue the

EXCLUSIVE

The Hon. ANTHONY STALEY, Minister Assisting the P.M. in the Arts, talks to Theatre Australia.



"At least he's no Philistine"
— Whitlam.

case.

One thing I feel fairly strongly about is that I know there is a fairly small actual physical audience for theatre in its different forms, but it'd be to think that we might ever adopt the user pay principle to the point where only the very rich could afford to take part in the Arts. There is no argument which I'd accept that says you can do without subsidy at the level of the top performing companies or without stimulus and incentive being provided in the private sector.

Subsidisation is needed in the areas of education and education is that while there might be some very interesting questions about the subsidy issue, there is just no question about the top level not giving people all the ground and providing them with the after-school so that their creativity can be given the necessary stimulus.

We've made it clear that the I.A.C. will only recommend—we will make a policy. Our commitment to the Australians, and it stands like a rock and it is clear as the burning daylight. The idea of phasing out subsidy to the Arts just isn't on.

We will look at responsible suggestions as to how the Arts could be set up and we will always attempt to do that. We'll start to see that we do have a number of expenditure on heavily subsidised major companies, you do

got to watch these sorts of shows, they can become bureaucratic and conservative. It's everybody's trouble. We're clearly looking at all these things anyway—I don't take the I.A.C. to make us do that.

They have made everyone ask questions. Such as how in terms of criticism can we make that individual performers and the theatre generally receive proper stimulus? How can we get away from the fact that the large companies, because they are without influence, get a lot more and most of the cuts and because more and more top heavy? The Australia Council has expressed its concern about this and we will want to do everything it can to ensure there is a better spread of resources in the future.

What about the concern for indigenous shows? Certainly these are the sorts of questions which demand answers, need I say more? I'd want to see those answers. I am concerned for our own forms, not create other Australian forms, but Australia skilled in their arts and crafts whose nature the world that we can produce stuff which touches and drives an inspiration from things at universal level. I want to see A. Raza to Mabo at the Parade and it's not that indigenous dance, arriving an exciting way to pursuing one of the great myths of the century. Our people might have a distinctive setting, and might sometimes include design. Again sort of things but God help us if we believe it's got to be a burden all over the place itself.

Funding from private industry? I can't make any commitment as it's a big study not to be completed until next year, but I do think we need to see how we can turn resources out of the private sector and into the arts industry.

I don't want to be too specific but I don't think there is any question that there are people who can be outstanding support for the arts industry. I think we have a responsibility, now Australia is so over loaded, to find ways of spreading the burden of patronage by opening up resources for others to help the Arts. That seems to me to be the way to breathe the Arts—the way to diversity and excellence.

Your position as Minister Assisting? I don't see of back work and the P.M. comes in at the basic level. The Arts are in his department and he has ultimate responsibility. It is perhaps he wanted to maintain a personal involvement, not just respect or favour to the businessmen that he appointed a minister to assist him. Otherwise he would have had to rely on diverse sources of advice.

The P.M. is very concerned that there should be a concentration on the Arts in his Government. This is a personal determination.

He loves the Arts. He sees it as a power and indeed, I think, he has always taken a strong interest in theatre, painting and a number of art forms. All politics is a heavy no little time to take part in the Arts, they are enjoyed and they are things from those which would do them most good.

And Theatre Australia? I've been most excited by the venture and my great hope would be that you will continue to develop in the way in which you have started. You have got quality staff across a fairly wide spectrum and are filling a tremendous need. As such I hope we can assist you in a number of ways in the next long year.

See an *Economist* view of the I.A.C. Report p.42.

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Reviews

LA MAMA THEATRE

ALBERT NAMES EDWARD

John Smythe

ALBERT NAMES EDWARD by Louis Nowra. La Mama Theatre. (World premiere 13 x 20.) Director: Darryl Kerr. First seen: ALBERT NAMES EDWARD. PETER MANNING

Louis Nowra is a highly individual brilliant playwright of enormous skill, perception and integrity. He has been writing here in Australia (Melbourne) for 40 years, one of them whilst in receipt of an Australian Council grant. Have you heard of him or seen any of his plays?

Before I launch into a diatribe concerning the lot of our lesser known playwrights, let me take a relatively safer look at one of Nowra's that has finally made it into production.

ALBERT NAMES EDWARD is the second play one yet to be completed, quant in which all the central characters are outcasts. Each play involves the publication of a private hell.

Part of the four is Gwendolene, George's daughter, takes on a number of different personas and his builds a dreamhouse to accommodate each one, she turns further and further inward, all contact with reality is lost and destruction ensues.

The third is Andrei Voznetzki, set in Russia in the 1700's and centred round him, her opponent is the Romanov regime, who would have been free. It had Catherine the Great not had him imprisoned at the age of one and forbidden anyone to talk to him. The architect of a military coup has him trapped to speak his language and tries to use him as his puppet.

Inside the Island, not yet completed, is the final play of the quartet.

ALBERT NAMES EDWARD was first written for stage performance. But it was adapted for radio, broadcast by the A.B.C. and translated into German (the requested place from the A.B.C. and selected only a A minor 2 - high grade indeed in a country where even Peter Handke and Gunter Grass regard it as a privilege to write for radio) before being given its first live airing at La Mama (October/November).

It involves the rehabilitation of a man found beaten up in an alley and suffering from amnesia. Albert is the perpetrator of this Good Samaritan act. An unimpressive chap who shuffles about in a shabby overcoat and hat clutching an artists bag (replete of a makeshift and affluent past or a second-hand cell to literary fellowship). A man of simple needs who is no doubt lonely at times.

It explains that I have forgotten the murders, his new purpose, and how he is going to search for clues, himself so readily to the task of re-educating the unfortunate victim of a brutal assault and robbery.

There is genuine poignancy in his authoritative but spellings (phonetic) 20-5-1918, eight, eight and in his constant references to what happened when Charlie Gable got amnesia in a film he remembers.

He is a little over fiddled out, perhaps as he pines to about his severely hurtled and more home. But who would deny him that if he for him to proceed what little is left of his dignity? Mind you some of those old hat street experiments and exercises teaching methods are a little hard to condone. And Albert's claim that that he first manifested a sense but student suddenly remembers is suspicious to say the least. Little things like repeating is a patient's recollection that he only has one sugar in his tea and giving him two again begin to emerge as significant behaviour patterns.

Thus the anatomy of repression and manipulation is slowly exposed. Myths are created which reinforce Albert's control. Albert must always check the general build to make sure it hasn't grown an invisible but deadly wound. "By the way, your arm will drop off." Newspaper and books (Mickey Spillane novels) are suppressed. The mirror is removed

and the windows are painted over. Rules are changed at will so that the boss always wins - at cards and everything else.

Albert gains total power over the mad as the man he has chosen to name Edward. Edward turns out to be Albert's long lost brother whom everyone thought was killed in the war. But not content with this re-creating Edward, Albert goes on to condition him into becoming a mirror image of his own self. He has become increasingly aware of his mental life and this is his chance to life after death.

The memories Edward relied on, Albert adapts as a handsome, intelligent soldier who fought the Japanese war. Mr. Universe is a brilliant endow who chased up beautiful women on the beach from Brisbane, are strongly reminiscent of Gable and Spillane.

ALBERT NAMES EDWARD is an expertly crafted and absorbing play with all sorts of a number of levels. But as low-key surrealism and very obscure, the haunting reality of its perceptions.

Darryl Williamson's understated directing serves the play very well indeed. His production with ideally paced lines moved like a well-oiled and balanced.

Peter Bellhouse's Edward was thoroughly thought through and played with great truth and commitment. Bruce Kerr gave a finely crafted and chillingly subtle performance as Albert. My only quarrel is with his delivery accent - condensed as I understand it by both Williamson and Nowra. In fact I believe Nowra requested the non-Australian accent to be avoided on the grounds that it would contribute to the play's universality.

I'm sorry but I think that is just plain. It is an argument which makes of cultural cringe with occasional detours. Peter's play is no less



Bruce Kerr as Albert

Photo: Louis Nowra

unsuitable for their purely observed contemporary Shakespearean plays were performed in English when regardless of whether they were set in Paris, Constantinople, Australia, or anywhere else, the thoroughly Australian confusion of Warring for Goring (learly this year) liberated the universal absurdist and absurdist elements because it provided us with a familiar point of departure.

To perform Australian characters with English accents in a play written set and performed in Australia does nothing but make it unnecessarily remote. It is at least to suggest that we might otherwise be capable of generalising from the particular.

I am not suggesting that all Australian written plays should be heavily colloquial but some obvious forms of phrase cannot be avoided in this sort of play they should be effectively universal. A well placed piece of vocabulary can be just as revealing if not more so than the colloquialism to Spillane, Gable or World War Two.

But Nowak is very particular about it in the use of language in his play about the reasons for excluding G. V. Williams. He asked Nowak to defend his stand on language and he does so at the end of this article - (see)

Before we plunge into that however mention should be made of Garry Williams's conclusion to Lewis Nowak's development. It was he who discovered his first playwright's attempt *King The One Day Play*, a strong indictment of media exploitation and manipulation designed for the theatres and the screen - which Nowak now regards as a poor piece of work. Williams directed it at La Marm in July, 1973.

Subsequently he was engaged by Nowak to the death of Joe Green, a short biographical piece which has the police inspector from Green's last investigation his author's violent death and ended Nowak in a group developed task manual called *Afterimage* as the student's hack writer for the Melbourne State College where Garry was lecturing at the time. Such experience are available to a developer playwright.

But it was beginning to look like a one man fan club and Williams was starting to doubt his own judgment until an A.B.C. radio producer discovered Albert Morris (who was the Literature Board of the Australia Council awarded Nowak a grant).

Now this bright new talent is being discovered and it is all thanks to the M.T.C. It is good to see some commercial plays for schools. The Grand Savage Motel and they have just commissioned two more. The Last Laugh Theatre Restaurant and Zoo has commissioned Nowak and composer Sarah De Jong to write a musical tentatively titled *Be Among Parrots or Mordred*. However Currency Museum has published Albert Morris Edward by a collection entitled *Afterimage On The Old Glorious Moore And his novel The Money Of A Day* (about to be published) even the 1975 Angus and Robertson first prize for the most original manuscript first prize for the most original manuscript.

Williams's judgement has been vindicated. His solo voice has been joined by a chorus. And yet despite all that two superb plays *Starvation* and *Greenhouse* remain unproduced. *Inner Voice* struggles for its treatment (just finished) and *Albert Morris* (overseas) find another back where it all started at La Marm where ad hoc companies are obliged to cope with minimal budgets space, seating capacity and ticket prices.

Directors and writers get \$100 apiece and the actors split the already heavy rehearsal for fee. Something must be wrong somewhere when a superb play by a consistently brilliant playwright must still rely on the goodwill of colleagues before it can see the light of day.

DIATRIBE CONCERNING THE LOT OF OUR LESSER KNOWN PLAYWRIGHTS

A personal view of how things are for many struggling playwrights. Hard work, hope, enthusiasm and absolute bare endurance. Only occasional applause and recognition. Only occasional work to make it along the road to fortune while those with undoubted ability and integrity but without the necessary contacts are relegated to a European role. Where disbursement fails to be well defined pragmatism takes over. I want to be bugged about any more. The bastard knew I can write - from now on I'll only work on commissions.

Consider the fate of our playwrights over the past half decade. A handful have been almost exclusively in the line where they appear unthoughtful, unthoughtful, economic and confused. Struck almost heavily with genius which have been forced to misappropriate as brilliant blunders. Victim of a nation's hysterical line for profit and utility. Products of our impatience to get them forward, missing lagging and jumping straight into the line which we choose to expose that identify we Australia the other side of the line. The made has a potential - like it or not that's how it was.

Now we all know that sort of thing is okay especially in adolescence. It is healthy, enjoyable and safe. But in the end it is not creative. Something more is needed in the way of an entirely surprising and balanced environment of that process goes up to it. It is less than a little bit, not only now but in generations to come. And that is as much about it as taking as it is about common sense, accurate perception and informed perception.

Sometimes our hopes for the future. What has become of the countless writers whose plays have been done at the Playwrights Conference who have received grants and commissions - let alone those who have struggled to produce without support. What is doing their play?

It would be hard to suggest that a good play will always get despite the all too constant demands. The focus of theatre company. Many have been talked off on happily unrequited often pretentious dreams anonymous, pure theatre as the only one willing to accept such work at the relatively low rates and will go through the mazes of critical assessment, loss of rights, demanding judgments, then artists, then other. With some third wave of the theatre and eventually they are forced to wade through.

What is to be said that they play is not by directors only (they at least should have the right to interfere the printed page into theatrical form - conceptualising the live and generating the additional which can only emerge in performance) but the director's eye to enlighten months are put for the theatre. Seen then, especially when seeking further development and efforts they are likely to be told it was only once very quickly at the cost of a long hard day.

Some have been done on the cheap in desperation leading often to further bad results. Reduced fees and the theatre led by informed critical response - recent writers have in general altogether. Many of the writers directors and actors who are aware of the accident but whose plays around now quite rightly refuse to condemn them to such a fate. So they seek as soon for the what's what to give them the full time and full professional attention they deserve.

The most striking experience of all for a writer is getting consistently enthusiastic responses to a script which nevertheless remains unproduced. No work still is having a planned production (at least partially) cancelled for reasons totally unrelated to the quality of the work.

A case in point is Nowak's *Inner Voice* regarded as brilliant by all who have read it. Including myself. It has been rated one of the best plays ever written in Australia by most theatres and commissions.

Written early in 1973, it was scheduled to be the first production in the year of the M.T.C. at the Melbourne Theatre Company at Grant Street station.

The first two plays *Crossing Rivers* and *The Passions*, both imports and vastly inferior to *Inner Voice* (by any one of his other plays for that matter) were chosen as mass audience pieces which would build up the Grant Street following to that the more likely to be a small effort like Nowak's could be done. Cost was also important. *Inner Voice* had two Australian first and *Inner Voice* needed eight or nine to cover their costs.

The first two plays bombed badly disappointing the Grant Street budget. *Inner Voice* was dropped and replaced with a commercial show. *Gray Of A Madman* which was followed by *Michael Cova's The Gift*. *Inner Voice* at least but also significantly a performer had two hands imposed from Sydney.

Then to add insult to injury Simon Hopkinson, already knee deep in the Grant Street fiasco of the M.T.C. at Grant Street was commissioned (by whom?) to write a play for the number five slot despite all the reader-written plays waiting in a pile which people assured. Only two days before rehearsals were due to commence a barely complained "tough first" that probably ended *Toppling* finally interrupted. After two weeks of rehearsal the production was cancelled. It is unclear what side role for public performance to the date played by the official statement.

Toppling has been replaced by *Old Times* by a production of *Afterimage* (which I believe was originally had notes when it opened in London last year. Perhaps the powers that be saw it as an important addition to their *Mythology* Theatre season, following *The Passions* and *The Gift*. As you may have guessed I am angry and disgusted.

And what of *Inner Voice*? Plans are often for a National (Government) production next February. Unlikely as it is to be both to produce it but it must be assumed that such a compromise (lower cost) would not have been entertained had it been necessary not demanded it.

The only practical answer to all these problems has got to be for the managers of government suddenly to be directed towards something unproductive and compromise and forcing theatre companies to adapt long term plans for the comprehensive development of new green drama.



Suzannah York (*Shirley*) and Barrie Ingham (*Elysia*)

Photo J.C.W.

J. C. WILLIAMSON THEATRES

PRIVATE LIVES

J. C. WILLIAMSON PRODUCTIONS

MORE CANTERBURY

Jack Hibberd

PRIVATE LIVES by Noel Coward. Company Theatre (seated 18 x 28). Director: Robert Coleman. Designer: Kenneth Russell. Set: David. Lighting: Mervyn. Sound: Robert. Props: Susan. Book: Susan. York: Susan. Ingham: Susan.

It was a familiar experience sitting amongst the phlegms of moist-eyed matrons as they murmured softly with the vague-like world of Noel Coward's *Private Lives*. They complained the sets were not adequately as the handsome man, applauded Suzannah York before she had turned a line, and picked her daughters who never featured looked for her the scene.

One of the most ludicrous aspects of the star system is that it is largely a hoax. The (travelling) and (interior) of the media often puff up reputations and enjoy the more successful careers of the public are entirely depending their disbelief. They expect to these luminaries often from overseas the most extraordinary indulgence and when disappointed they frequently refuse to acknowledge that disappointment as such is the tenacity of their indoctrination.

Not that Suzannah York and Barrie Ingham are impostors or fakes. They gave polished and solid performances in the first of enormous English movies. Unusually, however, these performances are easy and unpretentious, something unimaginable from great actors when with material that is as understated as *Private Lives*. Having seen Barrie Ingham bring off superb performances in *The Red Shoes* and *The Mirror's Tale*, it was rather a shock to see him lounge through this stuff as if on a theatrical vacation.

Private Lives is undeniably a period piece, evoking that glancing and really decadent ethos of the Twenties: glamorous persons who dilly with both Hitler and the Depression on the immediate horizon. Its effusive characters, whose precise social backgrounds are meticulously never revealed (the film elegant birds across the fun land of provincial France. Paris

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MELBOURNE THEATRE COMPANY

THE GIFT

Garrie Hutchinson

Alan Bates is famous either at the end of Moore and Almond's *Being as it was* written three thousand years ago, or as the first of the substantial fashion by a succession of writers in it played like David's *Party*, and then in the end seems to be anything there is now absolutely nothing available short of a slender of real person. One may slender the fictional as well.

The question now arises: what can one do on stage. Here the reverse of the preceding question applies. One may do in real life almost anything, anything sexual one desires. In the past, one could and perhaps one, but, of course, rape, incest and underage lovers, although doubtless there occur. You may involve yourself in rape, incest, incest, incest, and even incest to your heart's desire, made up of any part of the imagination of a sensitive ready available to the discerning partners. But you may not do any of this on the stage.

Admitted, you may not really do it. That is to say, you are not permitted to teach genuine partners with the greatest of your efforts in a public place, to act in a theatre. When you may do it, however, in a private place, of course, or physical climax. You may talk about it, but you are not in the line. You may act it. Because if you are on stage, acting (representing) you are not a real person. You are a series of ghost, and ghost is not in reality doing it. But in representing that, after I have made the conventional speech of drama, which actors do not act so much as feel you may appear in as much as possible as you like. You may be naked and you may, unless a Wendell girl move. You may expose yourself, perform obscenity and obscenity. You may touch. But you must not do it.

Not that I can say without watching people fuck. I believe watching is not as good as doing it. After all, there are some porno movie actors, who seem to enjoy being watched doing after a living. But it is interesting that the actual parameters, if you like, is the play where the line is currently drawn against the complete breakdown in obscenity as we know it.

Watching gillings, say whether they are real or unreal, or really unreal is allowable. But fucking on stage is not. Curious.

This is a topic Michael Covel's *The Gift* and reaction to it.

I want to tell you now what the *Gift* was. I know it was a naked woman. I want to surprise I know less than surprised as I think were the audience. Angela Punch (naked) in *The Gift* is a woman who is a ghost as much as an antithesis.

This is an interesting phenomenon. Nakedness, like covering and unbecoming *Being as it was*, is a phenomenon that causes a shift when rather than a break of surprise. In *The Gift* it is almost as if that is the inside of the character. More. He is barely surprised and is even annoyed that his sleep has been interrupted. He acknowledges it that he can imagine himself. Interrogating the character. Every as to why, and who said, but and play about for the long history of the world. What we don't know—and we know that don't really don't they—and we guess that the character has done it.

Someone once said that nakedness is the best disguise, and as the Emperor who wore no clothes found out it is almost true. Here Angela Punch's nakedness through a large part of the play occasions no comment, it is a costume like any other. Finally, I suppose this is due to her complete confidence in the audience, which was the play's secret and partly because it is a playfully performed and written play. The nudity is a theatrical stunt, but once accepted it is more remarkable than any other staging point, a murder and its revenge. For instance, we watch the logical unfolding with some awe twice too. It could also be that theatre audiences self select themselves for tolerance and against broad-mindedness—at least in Great Britain.

I don't think that *The Gift* is a play one should make large claims about. It has its own things, we should expect literary intelligence not. It is in a conventional way of why it will attract play to its analysis or experience of sexual play and marriage may well be anything new and good, but it is an account that could not be experienced on television. It is a theatrical experience. Not only that, it has humanity and it is interesting. There are things not to be scoffed at no matter how many times they have been presented before.

The Gift is also a play that is in Australian social, commercial. That is to say, it is an audience of, say, a hundred a night for a week in Melbourne and Sydney. Perhaps with some Irish promotion and a sudden personality or a necessarily an (some) night about more and staged in a suburban company it would doubtless run its seven or eight weeks. However, put on in a large commercial house it would drop dead. Not because of the play, but because I believe that the only very large theatre audience in Melbourne nowadays is for popular musicals, preferably using rock music, or for something pulled up as sentimental and outgotten (or like *Flowers*). The time of the night play is generally popular is gone. And in that sense, Michael Covel is even good, because all playwrights, as we saw, are not only in the audience for theatre class-based (educational and essentially determined) now, it has always been so with the possible exception of the nineteenth century. And the advantage of group of people do not seem to find the physical gratification they need. This is left to the other than their social consciousness sport, gambling and work.

Gift: Gift by Michael Covel. Gift by: Theatre Company, The Gift. Gift: Angela Punch. Gift: Michael MICHAEL ALMOND.

Not so long ago people were arrested in Melbourne for watching sex plays. They are still arrested for possessing offences, but laws that differentiate between life and art aside. One remembers with a certain amount of not slight anger *The Days in the Sun* at General Blundell and Lindsay Smith being arrested for



Angela Punch (Bates) and Michael Almond (Moore)

Photo David Parker

The play is described as a Chronicle of suburban life in two acts. We are taken simultaneously into the homes of three suburban families: the Kinnans, a young couple — he is a minimalist and she is very pregnant; the Pappas — living desperado lives on in the latest mode of their relationship; and the Whites — Bruce the night son man and his teeny wife Nola.

Inside and around these families revolve the lives of others. Young Jaymie (Peggy) Pappas watches the dogs around the block in person and learns much about life by being an unwitting observer of New York's subculture. Judy Pappas is a young teenager, discontent that the self-obsessed Roy Child is neither her and writes her self-suburban security with Rita Suddards, the conservative post office clerk. Julia Steiner the model becomes pregnant and commits suicide much to the horror of her friend the cosmetics, Mr. Ego.

Major baby is born. Rita and Bruce effect a reconciliation. Peggy learns to produce the suburban and suburban style and Roy Child leaves knowing that one day he will be back.

And over it all the heavy hand of an Australian summer and the constant sense of the dogs after the post back on heat.

As I said, it is a compassionate play and main the most sympathetic of the characters are allowed moments of quiet and touching anguish for a comedy of Australian manners. Australian popularity is always easily from one to comedy to drama from the hand to the wretchedly real.

Nola Kinnans is closely related to Mrs. Luty in *The Men From Nowhere* to Mrs. Doctor in *A Cherry Sun* and Mrs. Quodling in *Wings on Bird Mountain* — all her art and cunning with them as a respectable life force.

Rita Fitzgerald as Nola Kinnans, especially in Act I with her guilt her self and her own and her reconciliation with time well signified. For her, as an actress, I would go to any length of this performance must be the greatest achievement in the young actress's life. Gone are the mannerisms and affectations which had begun to permeate some of her recent work. Her Nola was raw, exposed, vulnerable yet still with an enormous edge to her. With one or two small adjustments her performance in the first half will be equally true. There is a touch of something elderly in Miss Fitzgerald's performance in Act I. I doubt if Nola would make a bed with a cigarette dangling out of her mouth and I doubt even more in the films where this production is, that she would go through in a pair of jeans and a lurch blouse more apt for Kings Cross than an elite Sydney suburb. Nola, although she has a freshness of tongue and an up-to-date for the senses is a woman of property. Her house is spotless she doesn't drink, her use of the word "suffered" brings a robust life to her lips. Nola is determined to prove that she is as good a housewife as her own way as her neighbours. It is the conflict between her need to be respected and the egoising needs of her body that she writes her anguish in Act I. All of Nola's is a small change of emphasis.

Max Cullen as Nola's husband Bruce at this moment still looks the self-righteous good humour of the character. He is still a little too good to correspond with Nola's description. Do you know why I loved you? Because you were never angry. You always stood up to it, you better than the others. That little bit bigger. I said he is cheerful. I'm glad to hear that before anything else.

Maybe it is the actor's physique or his stance



Bill Hunter (Roy), Miss Cullen (Nola) and Kara Kinnans (Rita) Photo Robert McPherson

but I did not really believe that Bill Hunter as Bruce Kinnans "does a good". Somewhere in the North West (by night) as seen in *Quadrant* "Digger" Hunter should be very and some how else with the strange dogs after the beach indifference. Mr Hunter seems a little too comfortable in his own suburban than twenty country. The scene in the Kinnans household which involves their dogs, their, waiting and looking together contain the best of the play. The theatre, which is over and over and over a dogging reminder of the loss to theatre when White left off writing plays.

The other characters in the play in comparison, tend to be somewhat sketchy and it is to the credit of Michael Foxton and Paul Bennett that they imbued the Kinnans and their lives of soft subculture with a quiet dignity. This was a very real achievement for Jim Shannon, equality these characters needed and which in both my productions I doubt if I was able to achieve.

In the middle house Peter Whitel was rather wasted in the slight role of Chris Pappas a man of depressing anti-idealism.

As his wife, Gail, Robin Nixon contributed the humour (the small mind and values) and the aspect on "demonstrated" the role requires. She also lived the character's essential loneliness and longing for union with her husband, her children and her life. However, Mr Barry Humphries has since the writing of the play, made this type of housewife completely his own and it will be all right for Nola Kinnans to be a little more than the stage. With such lines such as "I like a lot to look different, as long as it's what the effect is wanting," and "There is nothing common about women, and these women have all of them. There is only a glacial sense away."

Jim Shannon has brought a restraint to this production, following his natural integrity and inventiveness to serve the playwright. He has followed Patrick White's requests to the letter. The set by Winifred Dickson, is these classical grey lines backed by a curtain. In the kitchen there is a minimum of social furniture — a stove, a table and chairs and a comfortable and matching chairs. Each kitchen has a basic colour — the Pappas' blue, the Kinnans' brown and the Whites' pink and these colours are carried through into the costumes. Most of the kitchenware, plates, glasses of beer are ornate. Again, in accordance with Patrick White's wish, although in his notes he has said

"whatever it will make the action more truly or then action." I must say that I did find the setting quite distracting especially as it was covered with visually varying degrees of success. Besides I doubt its validity — the suburban residents are a tangible image of achievement. As Bruce says, "That's the moment I got everything done."

Above and beyond that the cast has responded well to the affection and professionalism Mr Shannon brought to the play. Patrick White had every reason to look pleased as he took a curtain call.

There are two roles in the play which I feel are pretty near as playable — one poorly understood and the other unnecessary. The first is the model Julia — what she has and is doing in the Pappas' bed is always been beyond me and that such a cool, ambitious woman should all happen because she is pregnant has always been out of my comprehension. Sexually she has been as lost as it corresponds with the birth of Royon Kinnans the super objective of White's play is that of a suburban form of suburban endogamy. But intellectually and dramatically to what it is.

The second is the character Roy who acts as a chorus and has always seemed an enigma as what he describes we have in detail on stage. It is somewhat as if Mr White is subtly ensuring that we do not miss his point. I will think that the role of the chorus, cutting young into does not work. Andrew Sharp brought a young idealistic attitude to the role and it is not his fault that he only just made it palatable. I have seen the other actors battle with the role and even the talented Reg Lunn in Melbourne could not bring the character to life.

Part of the reason for these two unsatisfactory characters may be in the fact that Patrick White seems unable to write realistic roles for young men or women. Something is lost in our understanding the age range of puberty to adulthood. Judy and Roy in *Seasons* are two other casualties with their stilted stiff language and attitudes.

With children, witness Peggy and Jackie. What is delightfully acute and for adults he can write a little funny real characters. I don't play it why, only regret it.

Hard words? I hope not. On the first night in Adelaide a young designer sent me a telegram — "Nola is pink. Gail is a blue. someone a soft white. I hope it's a night." I'm not far from a Welcome back to the theatre, Patrick White.

Those members of the media who helped celebrate the birthday with the cast and their friends enjoyed themselves to the full judging by the noisy reception.

The new show is appropriately called *The Best of Van Pelt*. It has all been done before but the freshness remains. Some of the sketches have become classics and aches and aches demand them again and again.

John Hewitt with *My Boozmaning World* Come Back brought forth the lunatic audience response usually reserved for pop singers!

One of the funniest pieces of the show is used to close Act I. It is a glorious ballet named up complete with large burlesque ballerinas (David Pester) who delight by a bare-chested baller. Not a new idea by any means but hilariously done.

This then is the product of ten years hard work at Kilara for John Hewitt. An out-poker actor he decided to make his own opportunities. Things were not made easier in Kilara for his venture. A suburb of Sydney knows more of his general a good mad as a class residents than for any theatrical activities. It presented a real challenge. Now many of the locals are John's most ardent supporters.

Peter Parkinson has been at the 860 newfor ten years and is considered part of the place. Peter a comedy timing, incredible elastic face and the simple way he at times outgaged everyone have made him a favourite.

John and Peter spent the last changes for each show, although as the like Louise Hewitt (John's sister in law) appear frequently.

John has earned to place himself out of the show, appearing only in the second half. He wants no constraints on dancing and also planning for the future. A future which includes a possible national TV series. John



John Hewitt and Louise Hewitt

Photo: Ray Wilson

has recently been given the rights to mine on TV, previously forbidden for all performers. He is producing a pilot programme and says he has enough material for fifty two one hour shows!

Television aside, John still has thousands of followers for his live shows and is preparing a new spectacle for 1979. Despite some recent legal problems with the audience over the premises, the future looks bright.

Along with his many fans I hope John Hewitt becomes too involved with backstage activities to quit performing altogether. His legs shook five inches whether 'dragged up' as a man thirty yards and with a pop singer, cowboy ballerina or as Daily Lucy singing. Hello Daily is always a welcome sight!

Happy tenth Anniversary Kilara 860 - and many happy returns!

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pleasant trained singing voice but did not attempt to reproduce Melba's death-throats or her powers, making use instead of the nostalgia in heretofore in the real Melba's recordings. In the production Hilbert was more to the point as published by Gollancz Press than Mick Raggie who takes a number of liberties which diminish the touches of quality in Hilbert's writing - and indeed in the personality as it has come down to us. The message I came away with in Adelaide was that the latter (noted essential to development can make the creative genius a right bastard. Melba's treatment of her fellow characters was ruthless at times in Adelaide, and historically probably true. Its drawback finally was that without full exploitation of the artist's decline in the text or of the voice in performance, the audience will not always inclined to empathize in other words I found Mr Kruger's Melba a pretty unlikable character and I needed more to justify my concern. Certainly, Mr McGregor's Melba, in the contrary, is engaging in every part and her voice. If not exactly in Melba's class, that voice is instantly a moving poetic warmth - in for example the mad scene from Lucia di Lammermoor when again the feeling that "One can forgive her everything. But this is not without cost, as Hilbert's text. Some of her few moments only, as he said, it is almost done in fact, that there is nothing much to forgive. And when in the last line the words of Melba I found her quoted. Adieu seems remote, it contains not a lifeless struggle accomplished but a reflection upon a life lived without bitterness and in Mr Kruger's terms, without passion.

A *Teatru in Melba* was greeted with enthusiastic praise by the critics at the late Adelaide Festival. At the time I wrote this as well that the current productions of Shakespeare's *Coriolanus* and Tennessee Williams' *Kingdom of Heaven* should be knocked so heavily in the process of giving Melba as a whole. For the sake of being the first to give my verdict was incompatible.

But the answer to the riddle was in Hilbert's own mind of popular theatre. At *Teatru in Melba's* great quality is that it is accessible. After the two-hour quality of Williams' irregular world and the all-powerful politics of *Kingdom*, the world of Melba was, literally a coming home. Such a homecoming is not to be undervalued and almost thousands of Australians are confirming to value. But here lies my serious reservation. To present a ritual in the theatre is not enough the author must also interpret it. Thus we are asked to see the historical account of Melba's life and that is certainly an education. But it takes the examination no further. It should like to go on those fascinating moments of what an agent or what it is that Melba shared. Where no specific reach out to Melba in sympathy, to pity her or admire or even despise of her. To be allowed to find light of emotion in fact, which will hold her in our memory.

This second no may, finally a fatal flaw in *Teatru in Melba*. But more to give us than that in the case of Hilbert's other work, I have not a pessimism at the note which can only be dejection. The play stops where Melba dies. The last commences a few lines of Ave Maria as an epilogue of the funeral and her apostle Farewell Without Bitterness "Is this self and ease. That is all" is Hilbert's reply.

The serious implication for his work, at least in my view, is that Hilbert has a somewhat bitterness but it without facts and without hope. And looking these two, it is not inevitably to love without the cry.

HOLE IN THE WALL

THE MAIDS

Colin O'Brien

First MAIDS by Joan Garner. Directed Alexander Gray. Cast: Ann-Marie Murray, Brian, ROBERT BARR, MARGARET BARR, Christy, JAMES FRASER, MARY, ALEXANDER HAY.

Joan Garner is of the exquisite debilitation or poignant perfume, school of aesthetes. This loose collection of a number of scenes, some of such diverse talent as the Marquis de Sade, Oscar Wilde in his *Salome*, and Aubrey Beardsley, Edgar Allan Poe (I) and that swirling sea of which painters Salvador Dalí (George Orwell is also fascinated here) in turning these people together I was not like I thought the I am condemning them out of hand in its best and most pervasive - and that for me, rather, Hilbert's *Coriolanus* is a searching and revealing as aesthetic movement as any. But I have found an essentially full sensibility (one that I have wrote *Salome* in French and that Poe is more defined in French than in English speaking countries) the Anglo-Germanic tradition prefers other less exquisite tastes and perspectives, it more tell to the vast Angles and that judgment than the other what the great creation.

Garner was the first to see of a generation who abandoned her. His later projects had been seen to prove as a chief for writing. He spent most of the working life in prison where he was, literally and metaphorically, battered by the French prison (just) system. I think that the *Five Years* of Garner's life and some acquaintance with his other works helps us in coming to terms with *The Maids* although as a rule I find that we should play (geographical explanations or interpretations of artistic endeavors, together with Mr. Auden's right interpretation to be better a complete misunderstanding of the relationship between an angle, or even attempting to reason and justify play value, usually, is better to see A.L. Powers.

Garner wanted the three roles in *The Maids*.

all female, to be played by young males. In choosing the last production in 1946, Laurence Olivier persuaded Garner to allow the women to be played by men. The production since Alexander Hay has followed Garner's wishes in using an all-male cast. He has also given the play further dimensions by setting it in a prison, dividing both he has played by men. Garner's other work, notably *The Five Years Journal*, *The Maids* of the Year and, especially in writing and content, Garner's last play *Deathwatch*.

The only justification for such innovation is that it works and I don't just mean is theatrically effective, but that it discloses the spirit and gives meaning to passages, emotions and scenes which might otherwise be obscure. On such a criterion Mr. Hay's changes are triumphantly successful. His effect clearly been that of theatrical reality and a political cross-reference to Garner's other work, we would be justified in considering such scenes as interesting. As it is, I found that a play which on the only other production I have witnessed, seemed overrated and overlong became meaningful on its own terms.

The theatre attracted Garner precisely because it was about playing, about the status of reality and fiction. The clear mind he gives that he is concerned to a narrow distance and self-interest in both social and social terms, hence the brutal as a contrast for every out space, reveal political power games in *The Maids*, the exposure of the relationship between pressure in playwriting and the exposure of totalitarian in a sexual context in *The Maids* and *The Spies*.

The theatre as a direct image of life has become something of an obsession in twentieth century drama, perhaps as a reaction to the nineteenth century's preoccupation with realistic illusion as the image of reality. Nevertheless, it was not accepted by Proust for the benefit of the *Maids*. It was a common European dramatic and poetic motif even before Shakespeare, although he expressed it at its most subtle. I am not thinking only of Jacques and Mabeth, but to the fact that Shakespeare more than any other before him drew attention to the essential mystery of theatre as life. In stressing the boy actor beneath the girl persona, often given further part by her being disguised as a boy, he showed that our present on of others and environments of our own existence is necessarily bound up with the roles we assume or have imposed upon us. The characterization of Shakespeare is given in its most extreme expression not in the comedies but in the stories of a tragedy, *Anthony and Cleopatra*. Just before Cleopatra's suicide, Shakespeare has the authority to completely understand her real credibility in his own play, to draw attention directly to the play as play and the boy actor as drag queen by having her alone, being, some speaking Cleopatra by my presence in its position of where.

Nothing so exposes the power of roles to determine action and the arbitrariness of the nature of roles and the way they are imposed than the theatrical elements in the chapter of the story from his assumed persona. Surely this in part explains the fascination of the whole drag tradition whether it be in the form of a paragonist dance, *Barry Lyly* or *Rocky Horror*. The main meaning of the whole is that it is different attention to the fact that fashion is arbitrary, discursive and often satirical in making women conform to an

image, in short it is a process of turning things into idealized objects.

It is not surprising then that Kate Millett in her excellent *Sexual Politics* concludes with a chapter in praise of the image (with of course into sexual roles, it being dominant of these modernists, or better yet, of colonial femininity D.H. Lawrence, Henry Miller and Norman Mailer. She notes that Gervasio was usually in prison, so freely and of dominance and subservience with the master (powerful both in the prison hierarchy and as sexual exploiter) dominating and degrading the female or Christian who came from the Miller sees this as an image of sexual power politics in the community at large. There is even a strong religious parallel (at which the turning of all slaves into priests is an emblem) between the Christian concept of

strength through suffering and humiliation and a certain morality through subservience of the dependent role given, the master's virtue in each case being the agency of a false morality and of course the masculinity of the males is as much a denial of the female's femininity as is the aggressive avoidance to postures as an all at once masculine but

Alexander Hay's decision to set the play in a prison is a recognition that that grotesque image of sexual power politics often finds its clearest artistic expression in the image of an all-male institution, whether it is an English public school or a French prison (though rarely historical institutions female roles assigned tentatively to females in outside society - are given females, thus missing that such role assignment is not primarily about

sex but about power).

The meticulous and clearly focused expression of such power games in the production is also expressed in Gervasio's costume and set design, a prison with a grimy window pane, and a cross emerging from the bookwork below it, the room prison grey but adorned with flowers, a history pain upstairs left.

Salvage, the strange in performing of the two minute in entering the role of the main subordinate Gervasio who in turn is playing the dominant Madame. Although they relate through their games, it's does not love him and there is little more than mere gilded cake in their mutual love; he is a slave bound to one another. Madame can come and go more or less as she pleases, subject to the will of the never-present Monsieur (back to that in this production the much were prisoners Madame asked a "buddy" or low-ranking warden Monsieur chief warden. But the prison ranking does not matter, the power structure is clear. I could not help but see the analogy with *Waiting for Godot*. Salvage the equivalent to Vladimir, Clara Estragon, Madame Pozzo, Monsieur Gerd. No wonder the story in San Quentin found Gerd to be credible. As did Pozzo, Madame swings lively through the action, a Trifon among the mirrors, or perhaps more aptly a baroness among the small fry.

Chris Ferguson is a moving but voiceless Clara. Robert van Meelemborg a glowing early Salvage, Alexander Hay a powerful Madame. People have suggested to me that Alexander Hay dominates the play stylistically as well as in the power of Madame, that the other actors do not measure up to the standard of his performance. I think this is a confusion between the roles and the actors. I found the playing of both much alike and to the purpose, there being not one moment when the interaction between the two and the subject was not crystal clear.

Robert van Meelemborg I have long thought deserving of more notice than he has yet received for his skill as an actor. He has the ability to adopt a quite amazing range of roles without either the appearance of effort or drawing attention to his skill doing so. It is only in retrospect that one becomes aware of his extensive range and the unconscious skill and economy he brings to his work.

As Clara Chris Ferguson confirmed the good impression I received of his acting in *The Role Across Lake Constance*. He performed in *The Model with a Remedy*. At times nearly hysterical, totally a task which nearly balanced Salvage's subtlety. It was a subtle and well-balanced performance.

And finally Alexander Hay. The intelligence and insight which went into his directing was clear: the action and its subtextual meaning were always apparent; the actors completely certain in focus and direction. As Madame a heavy narcissism set on him, a powerful menacing self-sag. He took away with make-up gold necktie, baroque, and when he took off his dress a grotesque polka-dot cum-suspenderish holding up light brown stockings in contrast to the male black, a figure of rampant pansexuality and power. For me the conception of Madame was absolutely due to Gervasio's voice of uncompromising masculinity, a steel edge of a performance. It was chillingly grotesque, a mixture of outrageous vanity and self-regard yoked to a cold, humiliated, astonished power image of you well, a cross between Frank Tring and Madam Pozzo.



Chris Ferguson, Alexander Hay and Robert van Meelemborg.

Photo: Sally McCourt

SOUTH AUSTRALIAN THEATRE COMPANY

AND MISS REARDON DRINKS A LITTLE

Guthrie Worby

The way things are changing, the visiting Miss Reardon is going to be the talk of the town for a while. In the past, mainly Adelaide has been a 'beating parade' the Black Theatre of Prague came and went in a week. Theatre Australia was obviously not what the backers of Bill Read's *Five Wives & Sons* & *How Billy* were asking for - but the play closed prematurely just the same. After the cast had taken up its bid and walked, there were a few dull rumblings as T & T squeezed the 'straggles' and the playlight, but that was all. As we thrust 'Billy' from us, we embraced an evening 'Tatty Show' for a night. Pretty Limited Productions presented a benefit performance for playwright/poet Dorothy Hewett in the Town Hall. 'We're gonna sing the out-mourne you'll love - "Makin' love" A. fleeting people.

Fortunately despite a certain stiffness on top, and a somewhat ragged fringe the S & T C combined what was left of the theatrical trickster and started a focus on two from Reardon for was a fading, and the (A.C. score!) Lushmore Theatre arranged to blink and be blinked at by a pleasantly surprised public, and a campus lot of the appropriately named *Excess & Defect*, by Rodney Fisher, also saw the light of day.

But Miss Reardon drew the crowd! Why? Is it a first rate play? As we eager to make again our newly acquired or revealed taste for entertainments in which products of the native imagination share each other with well-borne tertiary educated polytechnics? Maybe the early onset of the Festival Season is making us, driving us out at night to the theatre, involving full of determination to enjoy to consume and enjoy - Well, Miss

Reardon's problem is not beyond enjoyment at any time. But drawing the lot for early work or without loss is nevertheless a pretty tricky business. For all that audience have been giving their belly-rumble of approval to top agent, and here a blood in your eye!

Two short school-aching sisters, one dead parent to which they are irrevocably corded and apartment as located a nymphet that is unobtainable might be in provincial Russia or darkest America take a full measure of yearning for something better or at least different (what world were we waiting for, I sit broodingly in my room I wanted to add and you have a recipe for a play. It could be by Anton Chekhov, or Paul Zindel - two men skilled in the art of dissecting the social anatomy - but the sister who yields the matter for the piece lacks the script's precision and the memory of Dr Chekhov fades before Zindel's anatomy. His three sisters are facing a universal problem, but their version of it is homemade and marketed in the U.S.A. and neuritis, pleuritis, schizophrenia and liquor to taste - genuine New York, but happy.

I remember a production by George Ogilvie of the play about three other three sisters. It was full of subtlety, with a palpable subtlety and depth of feeling which eight years have not dimmed. I doubt that I will remember this production for as long or for the same reasons. To be sure Paul Zindel is no Chekhov, but his work has sufficient substance to reward our concerns and the right emphasis.

The production made a fine line between pure shyness and subtle black comedy, and a frightening existentially sexual tale. A nudie would have moved it onto way, but I felt that the audience was ugly, it only

AND MISS MISS REARDON DRINKS A LITTLE by Paul Zindel
Produced: Festival Theatre, opened 14 & 15 Feb. 1978
George Ogilvie (Director) - first version
Company: JUDITH GURNEY, Mrs. REARDON, MARY
REARDON, MARY REARDON, MARY REARDON, MARY REARDON
REARDON, MARY REARDON, MARY REARDON, MARY REARDON
CHAMBERLAIN, MARY REARDON, MARY REARDON



Dorothy Hewett (left) and Barbara West (right)

Photo: S & T C

towards the black side of the border.

There is considerable evidence to suggest that the table (stain?) tends to feature strongly in any production - references to fish eating and killing, fish symbolism, plus cats so warm-blooded and furry cast just a mile to cold blooded ones get the blues. Their religions and associations are too numerous to ignore. They are significant enough to use as a guide to a treatment that should make real dogs, cats, perch, angel fish, parrot fish, cats dogs rats, horses, monkeys and seals more than merely humanoid. They are the beasts within.

Eight months after Maria's death sister Celia comes to dinner to neighbours but sister Catherine (the Miss Reardon), and finally sister Anna, who has apparently done "something sexual with a young adult" at school during the last phase of her breakdown. The meal they are to share is supposed to be vegetarian - Anna has "discovered vegetarianism" and abhors flesh and fur - but the evening is destined to see a cannibalistic crop of brain-picking and soul-picking.

The anonymous Miss Reardon entertains with the familiar and fatalist game of card Russian roulette. The house rules appear to dictate that everyone may spin the chamber as long as Miss R. can pull the trigger. She shoots to kill and stores up the spoils. By the time the prying visitors, Bob and Peter (the French for Robert) enter an air has been a little untidy and her ammunition is little damp. She calls for reinforcements to assist invaders and Anna obliges by shooting at Celia and later Bob with a real gun - part of Maria's legacy - which as it happens is loaded with blanks. The touch with the almost lightens the ball out of all that.

Mr Ogilvie has spoken recently in a press interview of it is almost generic approach to this work of the way characters allowed their way to the centre of the stage. In order to show the bottle, then facade and the unusual mirror-image of nature. This tactic, I think, calculatedly accentuates the cadence and separates them from the body of the work - is its dramaturg.

Undoubtedly in performance, the focal point was downstage centre. Anyone who stood there was immediately flanked by one of three doors at the back of the apartment, and the eye then followed the line of the set up and away into the flies, then down again over a corrugated and potted fascia, past the street racks or mirror-windows which blocked distorted images back to the audience. Arm-deep (left), stage left, which appeared at the beginning, and came down in the end of the play, gave further notice of the intention to host the audience, suspended it for a while, and then bring it to learn with a new and freer point of view. Such devices, and motifs can doubtless be affected as they also on the risk of appearing transparent and gimmicky, particularly if the action on stage merely opens their dynamic without adding to it. The set implied that the play takes life inside-out and outside-in, did the doors and in view about the same proposition?

Judi Kurup's Miss Reardon saw life through a glass, darkly. Catherine's the out-going left or the touch sister wants to protect the little that remains of her independence and her past (including Anna) from the depredations of Super Celia protect them with a wing and a prayer, and who would blame her? The heavily protective, co-sussing Catherine Reardon like Raring captured centre stage. I've spent happily, less directed. But there is another deep-water Miss Reardon who



Daphne Chamberlain (Miss), Leslie Dayman (Bob) & Daphne Grey (Celia)

Photo: S.A.P.C.

assumed close scrutiny. It is she who uses Anna's fading mind, and Celia's hard head systems to feed her even oversteering. She is the "godless" subject of the play, who is "taking" all of them and everything. The audience should know before Anna says it Catherine is a creature - a person. She is a Miss Reardon to play and fear.

As Anna the germinal bait, the deuce Barbara West provided a mixture of witless vulnerability, capriciousness and obnoxious precision which persuasively drew attention from the predatory Catherine and laid bare on Celia.

Daphne Grey was thus cast as the "bottle". It was to her credit that she possessed the cool and ruthless hunter - Celia by name and nature - yet managed to expose Catherine's double role.

Leslie Dayman and Daphne Chamberlain gave the Stems inventiveness and rawness which

compounded the already severe disturbance in the murky depths of sisterhood. They clearly surveyed the minor nuances of land-based ignorance which turn, on occasion, night-blind and hydro-headed.

For all the sophistication, Stupid Celia with proven humanity in the play. The intelligent circulate sisters are allied of their heart and try to stave back out or walk away from their fears and sexual/social frustrations. We laughed at all their wit or playfully justification like the Chamberlain-playright will not let us forget that he wants us to look deeper into the very construction of our being for the predispositions which will turn us from gods into mutants and vice versa.

The production lacked a final infusion of DNA - that primary genetic material which forms the basis of new cells and essential protein.

Playwrights

The Beautiful Mrs Portland by Dorothy Hewett



base bones of the plot of *The Beautiful Mrs Portland*

Terry's daughter Kate Laffey immortalised for the title, and also to a beautiful actress based in our south she was always known as the beautiful Miss Skerrington. The beauty is both a gift and a burden, and when it begins to wane we need to turn to the area of a thesis that we can still savour and love. That is one of Mrs Portland's problems, and why she is so acceptable to the compliments of the young painter Robert Dean.

To my's second Mrs Laffey I am indebted for much of the concept. Discussing my play *The Tasty Mother Story* he said that it seemed to him I had begun to touch towards the end of that play a theme of significance that had been really engaged on the Australian stage, and that was that we had begun to see that the middle aged women, because her sexual (both moral) larger than the middle-aged man, in fact, after the fear of childbirth is a middle aged woman often have a violent increase of offense stemming to their husbands. Such information is really the starting is our society who like to keep their middle aged women as mother figures and their young women as the symbols a generation reflected clearly in the women in Australian drama.

Borne of this *The Tasty Mother Story* found Terry's final relationship with the young drop out (Paul Laffey's daughter). It was recent to reflect Terry's final challenge to the mores of her society, and seemed to be the inevitable. But because of the pressure of that society the only way Terry was able to survive into old age was to transform her sexuality by moving beyond it, to do it, to go to bed, and to be a better.

It was a very close to the solution found by Francis Verne for old ladies.

We decided that in *The Beautiful Mrs Portland* was a subject I should be equipped to deal with at some depth, and the only way to deal with it was to grasp the subtle danger and document the tragic loss of a young man and a middle aged woman. Tragedy would undoubtedly have to be the end of it because society would persecute them both into conformity or to a new resolution.

To my girlfriend who immortalised the plot line, I went back to her corrupted and steeped in the Western Australian wheat paddocks. There she kept the hair from off her neck, watch her face, get leading participants with thick bands of home made lace photo albums of ladies with pads in their hair and violet garments. She had been a society dressmaker in Melbourne at the turn of the century. Every portrait told a story, but until I was ten or eleven she was like I tell me the tale of the beautiful female man with the stretched painted blouse and high girdle hair. It is an unforgettable story and it forms the

base bones of the plot of *The Beautiful Mrs Portland*

The last that I performed again some memory I owe to the Opera House production that year of O'Neill's *Afternoon Becomes Evening*, and the brilliant performance of my friends Jennifer Clare and Robert Mann. I left the theatre saying aloud to myself, 'What we want in the Australian theatre are some bloody good plots', and coming about in my mind with the image of those two performing. My own woman still haunting me, I remembered my grandmother's story.

Discussing with Richard Wherrett of Nimrod my last play, *The Golden Claws*, he asked me why I didn't try a realistic play for a change. It was a form I had shied away from since my first play *Miss Old Mrs Carter's Raging Horse*, not because I ever had the temerity to enter at realism, since how difficult was to do well but I had felt that the exclusive business of Australian realism made it very difficult for other and different playwrights to bring the same theatrical as I believe was a challenge a realist play would be for me, so this, no reservation to enable the audience and send them out taking only the bones of a plot in *Tasty Mother* and garden in 1916, eight years deep, a touch of telegrams and a page ending.

There is the mind draft of a play that has been neither workshoped or discussed or performed. It has therefore not reached anything like its final form (although the word 'final' for a play script is very misleading. But I mean it by the nature of the art form different).

The experience has however already been settling, shaping and new.

I know that play had to be written in some form of realist form. It must not be in any other stage, no experiment, no experimental elements, but a Tasty Mother story furnished in the fashion of the time a garden

full of roses, an ordered lifestyle to be shattered by the events of the play.

At first I was drawn towards Chekhov, always my favourite dramatist, but I know that the underlying delicate problem of a Chekhov is beyond me for all time, however much I wish it wasn't. Then as the location of Tasty Mother's garden was set, I had me decided on the unique place and the steady outline of the remote garden rose like a centre was out of the garden. I knew I had been here before. For the story, the plot, yet even concept of surface, plot, place character and mood were: the only play which I could go to for my style was *Boam*. I had acquired for a couple of years in 1916 to find years at the University of Western Australia, and he had a cardinal solution.

At sometimes as I drew the heavier sweating lines I yearned for the delicacy of a Chekhov. It surfaces once I think in *Clare Portland's* last speech to her husband and father in that terrible drawing room. 'We'll go on living my darling. We'll be happy. It'll be as if it had never happened. We'll go on in this house, as if it had died, and her memory will fade gradually people will forget about her, and in a while while they won't even mention her to us, anyone.'

Do you hear it too a faint echo of the madness of *Sarah's* last speech in *Uncle Yarn*?

'Well, what can we do? We must go on living. We shall go on living Uncle Yarn. We shall live through a long long succession of days and nights ever more. We shall patiently suffer the trials which Fate has imposed on us. We shall work for others, now and in our old age, and we shall have no rest. When our time comes we shall die submissively and over there, beyond the grave, we shall pay for what we have suffered, that we may wait that we have paid about his and God will bless you. We shall respect and look back on these troubles of ours with tender feelings with a smile and we shall have rest.'

For the words of 'Sweet Adeline' I am indebted to the expert recall of Hal Porter. Clare's finger to a brother drawing room and the blending of *Grace* and *Clare* in their terrible drama, the final high notes of Rose's voice flaring out from the kitchen seemed to me a fitting accompaniment to the story of the passion of a middle-aged mother-in-law and a handsome son-in-law, a subject in Australia always only to be a bar room joke.

Sweet Adeline my Adeline
At night light heart I will I prize
Your face become in all my dreams
You are the flower of my heart.

— Dorothy Hewett Sydney Oct. 1976

Recovery – Having a plan to follow in the event of a disaster is essential for recovery. Recovery planning is a process that involves identifying the organization's critical functions and the resources needed to perform them. It also involves developing a plan to restore these functions and resources in the event of a disaster. Recovery planning is an ongoing process that should be reviewed and updated regularly.

1000

Scouting One and Two, late arrivals into early autumn, and an Epigeus and its Toad.

401

Abstract

T

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A common theme has been the growth of the book industry and the increasing competition for the attention of the reading public. One of the first to voice this concern was the publisher of the first hard-line title, a book of plain sailing, *How to Read a Book*, by Mortimer Adler. He said that the book was "a warning shot" to the "bookish" and "bookish" world, and that it was "a warning shot" to the "bookish" and "bookish" world, and that it was "a warning shot" to the "bookish" and "bookish" world.

During the second part of the identification session, in a big yellow hat, holding an identification card, the person was dressed in a suit and tie, and was wearing a white shirt and a white tie.

[illegible]

The play consists of two acts: one that looks at the past and one that looks at the future.

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A tall, beautiful, full-length brunette, with style, class and sensuality, Padden was controlled by a deceptively calm manner.

Adrian's party from your old President. A
 faded artist, former businessman, big in
 typical Victorian in some ways, that he had to
 in school today

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

Then younger men, in my opinion, identified themselves with the old Mother's boys.

CLAIM PORTLAND CEMENT

Their older daughter, Joel, dark, attractive, unassuming, is her early teen son

[illegible]

Clara's first husband, a baritone, whose husband, after many years

100

A fifty year old institution for Victorian

Table 1

His wife and Edward's mother, who is a

1000

They featured a pop, party, disco beat.

1000

In the Parlored sitting room, every one seemed for a moment already present. This time it was David who, sitting in a room that he had never seen before, seemed to be the stranger. He was seated in a high-backed chair, and looked at the people seated around him with a certain interest. He was looking at the people seated around him with a certain interest. He was looking at the people seated around him with a certain interest.

On either side of the open, dusty path, the small, slender Quins stand silently, waiting for their turn. A light breeze is blowing from the north, and the Quins are blowing from the south. A light breeze is blowing from the north, and the Quins are blowing from the south. A light breeze is blowing from the north, and the Quins are blowing from the south.

[illegible]

They all sang out: *Adios mi Rafael!*
 Fare you all goodnight! *Adios!* Go on
 Mother, be a sport, let things
 slide! *Chorus.*

1000

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From Thin to Thick

Thank all doctors, hospitals, doctors' wives and friends for their support. My husband is certainly going into nursing full time.

1997

Every kid in that room now knows how to clean up after himself. Can't deny that, huh?

Charles has moved closer to China in the new model and is showing his long-term interest in

Chandler Reminds Her Doctor
Grace [Dyl] has got a secret on front of him,
she's not really his friend!

[illegible]

Quesada Great and I will give a great handshake
(laughing)
to you. You are great. I really appreciate

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

Grace: Loved! (I'm in the new Grace
Chairs close to Grace here & back of my
Chair, down for this again!
Grace Chair)

Colours:

blame. One man from the "old world" and Charlie himself only "old world" friends. But then, as the newspaper says, "growing dissensions under the Bush cover-up." Charlie's shoulders are shaking in the play. "What's wrong is Ahab, and the mind's negative, positive, looking and into the



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Dorothy in her political prime

BARRY LALOR visited writer Doris Pitts at the time of her death. He left behind a book of letters and a collection of her work. The book is now available from the University of Queensland Press. It is a collection of letters and a collection of her work. The book is now available from the University of Queensland Press. It is a collection of letters and a collection of her work.

After a year of unpleasant legal and emotional hassles Dorothy Hewett is getting her life together again. One of the country's best known playwrights, the shared life story has been filled with drama, particularly and particularly in the early of her 33 years.

It is from that rich background that she freely draws for her plays.

She feels that people live largely on legends and myths that they make up from their own past, rather than living from day to day.

Of her early marriage:

"I suppose I was brought up in a family that relied on myth for about the past. There were all great storytellers and tale spinners.

Brought up in the country where people used to sit on open verandahs on hot summer nights, she heard amazing stories of her ancestors. Even she of the lines of other people living in the bush around her in Western Australia. They all became legendary figures in her mind.

In those days it was always quite common for the grandparents to live in the same house. This meant as a child you were always very conscious of time because old people died immediately in the past. I don't know whether this always means I have been told she added by way of an afterthought.

Now when Dorothy really gets onto a good writing streak (as she puts it), she gets into an almost euphoric state. "She's called it being a secretary to angels, and most writers get that way."

Playwright

REPRIEVE THAT

Dorothy Hewett interviewed by Barry Eaton

She is not like a writer for the moment as that takes over. Certainly when writing at her best some other kind of conscious has to present. I can quite see why writers in this past generation thought that they were possessed because it is a feeling akin to that sometimes. But all the time, of course. Would Dorothy Hewett describe herself as a seance?

In yes, but a slightly academic one!

Why academic?

I started off as a full blown romantic, but I was hard to keep that sort of bounce up into middle age, particularly in Australia.

Any sort of romantic writer needs control however otherwise they go completely overboard according to Dorothy. The control that she personally focuses is a black comedy device. This is her work of the world.

It is this fascination with the past that led Dorothy to start on her autobiography. She plans to write a book which will take the next two years to complete.

A leisure life script will keep her busy in the early part of 1977, but she plans to keep plugging away at the autobiography.

Right now, says Dorothy, all I would like is a lot. I have written five plays, two film scripts and a novel in the last three years and I don't want to burn myself out.

Receiving a government grant three years ago has been a great source of joy and also a reminder to Dorothy. The ability to be free to do the thing you most want to do in life is great. Now that her second grant has gone through she can look and plan ahead with no financial worries.

Life has not always been that easy for her, though. She has worked in an export factory, as a journalist at a Communist newspaper and finally as an English tutor at the University of Western Australia. All the time acting to be a full time writer.

She looks on her life as all being pretty miserable. There are some parts that don't fit me with any great joy and delight and others which were pretty painful at the time. Now I realise that they were all useful to me as a writer.

Being much less about material, she often put herself in a position to experience a feeling that had. She feels that when she is alone and when life is to be able to write. It started as a romantic idea but had sense and loved with age.

I am glad about most of the things that happened to me or that I caused to happen, because I know that there are no more parts of me a writer.

Nowadays Dorothy is a little more self-protective. Writing is paramount and nothing

must get in its way. The point means that she can do at least three times the amount previously possible.

While teaching at the University of Western Australia she became engrossed in her work and wrote mainly in the long vacation period. This meant a play a year — not a bad bit of luck. Now writing occupies all her time and she intends to make the most of it.

Dorothy feels that her many writers in this country are lucky enough to be in her position. For the many years writers have been looked upon as dilettantes at at best supplementing their real jobs with part time writing.

For Dorothy Hewett full time professional status means being able to take seriously in public what she always has done secretly. It is an 11th hour reprieve in her life and she intends to make the most of it.

It also means a change of life style.

Previously my habits of work were to stay up all night or work at night. This was just not good enough.

Not knowing exactly what she wants to do she feels the next three years will probably be her most important ones.

The immediate year ahead may see the completion of a play that has often frustrated her. The business was completed a couple of years ago, but then everything dried up.

"This is very unusual for me. When I go to that stage I usually go on and complete the play. I have it already something there preventing me from writing it."

She has completed two plays since the first one. The first one was a play about the life of a first fugitive, so there is obviously something different about this one — trapped in its embrace.

It is a play which deals very much more than I think I have ever dealt with. The setting is Canberra and also an island off the Great Barrier Reef. There are four characters — a politician, a nuclear physicist and two women are in the play. The other is a woman. It is seriously called *Every man an island*.

Dorothy always went to the trouble of laying political speeches, an unusual step for her. She has even written the preface to the play. Now it is in a paper hole in the filing cabinet, just waiting and causing feelings of guilt.

Well she's over that! "Definitely but only when I make up my mind about it. I want to say it is just not quite at the moment. Maybe in the next few months."

Politics have played a great part in her life. Well known for her involvement with the Communist party for 38 years, she has now turned her back on politics.

"I don't only get involved with issues that in some way relate to being a writer. I think that

REFRESHES



Photo: Mary Kelly

my whole experience being deeply involved with politics has wasted my time. I don't regret some of it, but I do regret the amount of time it took. In all these years I could have been making myself a much better writer than I am today.

Many of those experiences were used in *The Chapel Perilous* staged successfully in Sydney and Melbourne a couple of years ago. Many people thought the play was completely autobiographical. Dorothy has denied this.

She is very worried about the whole question of power. Power means politics and as she says: "I think art and politics don't mix. They are like oil and water and are basically hostile" — a very campy!

Since her break from the political world in 1968, Dorothy Hewett has immersed herself in her writing with increasing success. Her latest play now having production in Melbourne is *The Golden Child*.

It was written for the National Playwrights Conference in Canberra earlier this year where it was given a workshop production by Richard Wherrett. Since then Dorothy has rewritten and revamped with a lot of help from Wherrett, who has joined her in it.

It is most important for a new work to get a showing, observes Wherrett, "and this is a remarkably original piece which takes a new direction for Dorothy."

Golden Child goes into production on December 1st at national theatre MTC theatre. Graham Mundell has formed a company to present it and will direct the play himself. *Golden Child* will be staged in Perth and in Australia. Mundell would like to turn it up a notch next year.

Dorothy has just returned home to Sydney after visiting Adelaide and Perth. In both cities as well as in Sydney, local supporters staged benefit evenings for her. They were to help pay rental of legal cells when Dorothy is as troubled over poems published several years ago.

"The benefit didn't cover all my costs, but they certainly helped a lot," says a thankful Dorothy Hewett. It was all enormously warming.

The relief of getting the legal battle behind her means a lot to Dorothy.

I hope I never have an experience like it again. It's hanging over the whole of my life. It's very difficult to put something like that out of your mind. I hope it has made me self-conscious and modest when I'm complimentary when I put pen to paper. I hope it won't happen — I don't think it will.

Synopsis: Dorothy neither do I.

DOROTHY HEWETT born 1923, Western Australia, daughter of a Wickham wheat and sheep farmer, was educated by correspondence at Perth College, and the University of Western Australia. She began writing poetry, plays and short stories as a child; an overview was first published in *Margery Papers* at eighteen upon a one act University play competition, and at twenty-two an ABC National Poetry Competition. Always "stage-struck" she helped to found the W.A. University Dramatic Society with Philip Parsons, Jackie Ross and others. In 1944 she married fellow student Lloyd Dowse and in 1946 left for Sydney with a handwritten notebook, *Lee Flood*. They lived for nine years in the working class area of Sydney, had three sons, and were involved in the tumultuous anti-Communist years of the 50's. The *Crimes Act*, the *Communist Party Disruption Bill* and the *Peterloo case*. Out of these experiences came her novel *Golden Child* (1968), translated into two foreign editions and her first full length play *The Old Man Comes Rolling Home* (1968).

In 1969 she married Mary Kelly, merchant seaman, poet and short story writer. They lived in Perth where she became tutor in English at her old University. They have two daughters.

The Old Man Comes Rolling Home was produced at the New Fortune Theatre, W.A. University in 1966, and at the Old Tote, Sydney in 1968. Her first collection of poetry *Wendie Country* was published in 1969, and her second play *Mrs. Pearly and the Angels* had its first Sydney season in the same year.

The Chapel Perilous (1971), *Don Bore and Moore for Gole* (1972) and a 10th count

Campsey (1974) were all first produced in Perth. *Don Bore and Moore* had a second season at Jane Brown, Sydney (1972) and *Chapel* has been produced in Melbourne (1972), Brisbane (1972) and the Sydney Open House (1974). Adapted by the author it was performed on BBC Radio in 1976.

In 1974 with an Australian Council grant, she and her family moved to Sydney where she began her life as a fully professional writer.

Reverend in Suburbs, a volume of poetry published in 1976 has just gone into a second edition; a musical *Joan* was performed in Canberra (1976) as was the script *Miss Hewett's Shakespeare*. *The Terry Mallow Story* (1978) at the Stables, Sydney and *The Golden Child* works hopped in the 1978 Playwrights' Conference in Canberra will have a season in Melbourne in early '77.

Five Acts of Violence, a film script written with Tom Green and John Wiley is still to be released, and a two volume autobiography commissioned by Nelsons, Melbourne is just beginning publication.

Robbie Up, Australasian Book Society, Melbourne, 1999

Wendie Country: Overland and Peter Laydon Publications, Melbourne, 1969

The Chapel Perilous, Curran Playtexts 1972

Reverend in Suburbs, Point Poets, Sydney 1976

Don Bore and Moore for Gole, Curran's Methuen, Sydney 1976

The Terry Mallow Story, Curran's Methuen, Sydney 1976

The Old Man Comes Rolling Home, Curran's Methuen, Sydney 1976

LOOK WHAT THEY'VE MADE HER DO

Helen van der Poort

HELEN VAN DER POORT is chairman of the Playwrights' Center in Cambridge, Mass., and a well-known actress. She has been awarded a Guggenheim Fellowship and made dozens of films.

...of Theatre
...ness play,
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...less with itself
...wrote back with
...Dorothy Heavitt's
...in

...the play, and the director chooses an actor who is not "theatrical" in appearance. It is again purely a question of the director's taste. In an interview with me, the director pointed out that he had not seen an experienced actress for the first act of the play, in which the character has to be a woman who is not a woman, but a man, and that he had chosen a man for the role. He said that he had chosen a man for the role, and that he had chosen a man for the role.

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The Chapel Perilous. New Portland Theatre. Perth 1971

girl "wearing her hair like armour" has always been a stumbling block for directors in their casting, and even more for critics who feel it their duty to point out some autobiographical self-indulgence in all the plays. I reject the trite biography which has plagued Hewitt's critics, and feel that when Dorothy Hewitt terms the "tough vulnerability" of her central women is essential to her work. My own experience of conducting a workshop on *The Chapel Perilous* at Carleton in 1974 revealed how masterfully witty and objective the playwright can be in portraying her feared heroine. If Ms Hewitt herself is self-indulgent, then the indulgence must be of a highly metaphorical kind.

More to the point I would say is the possibility that the golden girl, so important in *Dolly and Rusty*, has now become something of a minor role. The subject of all the criticism (behind the highbrow style glamour) is now frequently repeated, and it is clear that in 1978 Ms Hewitt has attempted to subvert the blonde lady. In the first of her new plays, *The Golden Oldies*, she has removed her to the outside of the play. Still the most real and dominant character in some ways, the reproachful daughter Becca never appears in the play. The movie is a harsh one, as is a theatrical one: a star is allowed to appear only as she affects the consciousness of her mother and sister. This brooding of abuse means that Ms Hewitt is now able to explore old age and aging really as the minor motif with highly theatrical characters like Sally and Dolly. Likely to grow down the planetary moment singing about supports.

In the most recent play, *The Beautiful Mrs Portland*, the golden girl is gone. Or is she? Mrs Portland is a female, but is it just as Robert Wharmston has suggested to me, that she has simply dyed her hair? To be fair, he also commented that this is one it would be nice to meet, and indeed the change has left Dorothy Hewitt free to explore different relationships more fully.

Much on the manner of *Howling Beasts* (the play is offered a focus as the child daughter of Mrs Portland too, thus extending the investigation of mother-daughter ties that had become central in *The Golden Oldies*). In a play about sexual repression, it is not only

those of the title character which matter. "The Beautiful Mrs Portland" as she is always called is like Dorothy Hewitt's golden girl, in that she has a reputation to live up to. She is especially like Tracy in retaining her virgin state and often, unavailability (here), and she is like Becca in her unpossessability. But she is not perhaps as enduring as the others. The play concludes in such a way as to leave us wondering if anyone will ever remember her. And there is no blonde new world waiting Mrs Portland when she leaves.

Another element of Dorothy Hewitt's plays which has changed and become rationalised is the music. Influenced quite consciously by trends in *The Chapel Perilous*, she uses music in her plays in a variety of ways that one can view the play as a musical. She covers tracks around which with songs like "Without love I lay with you", she both entrances and ridicules with

"The Good Ship Venus" (sung at Sally Garsen's wedding, and the companion years of off stage action), by juxtaposing her Hershorne song with the M Q T H E R song on the death of Sally's baby. In this manner, and also appearing play, her use of music reflects the of poetic concerns that make it possible for Dorothy Hewitt to speak private and public history from 1939 to 1970. The association in Sally's word of her child's death with those of the Hershorne children and with her own mother's divorce music for the kind of dense theatrical experience that can be found in just a few moments of a Hewitt play. At times one asks, who would dare remove a single song? But of course this density often makes the plays too long and too complicated.

The function of the music changes in a clear way in what is possibly her finest play *Don Rick and Rusty* for Dolly. When the dreams of a golden girl are placed against her real life, Alexander Hay has recognised that Ms Hewitt weakens the theatrical impact of Dolly Garsen's sexuality revolving in too early and then is hard to dispute. But surely the insight we see that given with central impact to the songs and dreams of Act 1. The Mervyn Dine settings of the Dolly songs as used in Mr Hay's production at Jane Street in 1973 only enhanced the double view we are given of Dolly's world, being lightened and relaxing against the reality of Dolly's life. The whistling P. Laurence Song in Mr Garsen's music for the 1974 Dolly workshop in the same way, but the little song falls once we see almost too much in the correct mood.

In *The Golden Oldies*, directed in workshop by Robert Wharmston at the 1976 Playwright's Conference, much of the music has become conversationally appropriate to moment and character. Jane Street's lively singing voice added her performance of the cheerful nurse Robbie, who destroys all the songs and the companion Noah, who sings as she stinks. While the music adds drive to these characters, it is hardly possible in naturalistic terms and is helped by understated background music. *The Beautiful Mrs Portland* incorporates the music only where it is required by the plot. Thus we see the 1975 Tosses family singing around the piano singing *Sweet Adeline* while the mother, Adeline, sits



Jane Street Theatre production of Don Rick & Rusty for Dolly 1973 Photo: Robert Walker

be seen being fully embraced by her future son-in-law in the peace Melbourne-maybe-but-possible. Obviously this narrowing and tightening of Miss Hewitt's eye of reason makes casting and production easier in budget-conscious times: one hopes that the savings will return in later work. They are important for their dramatic power and the sheer theatricality of the plays.

Questions of theatrical legitimacy are central to any discussion of Dorothy Hewitt's future as a playwright. It is possible to view her changing style as inevitably as development or degeneration, and neither view will be entirely adequate. After George Whelan's Melbourne production of *The Crucial Point* about Miss Hewitt decided to make Sally Banner bow as the actress in that production had died. On the other hand, one cannot help feeling that in writing a conventional melodrama she has succumbed at last to theatrical pressure of a less valuable kind.

Dorothy Hewitt has admitted to being a theatricalist, and one would guess from the loss of glamour shows and the soiled settings in her plays. Unlike another self-confessed theatricalist, Patrick White, she has never prepared to compromise her style and unique double-view of men and women in order to get a professional production. It is appalling to note for instance that neither the *M.I.C.* (for the *Nitrate*), have given her work the commitment of a production, so one can understand that she might bend over backwards to make them change this. Pretty clearly her latest play is written with a theatrical renaissance in mind. It is subtitled

A melodrama in 2 Acts for 8 characters, appealing out thereby for information that the play is sympathetic, fairly short, and not all the time expensive. Indeed, it is not surprising for instance that these are the only considerations in changing her style: but there have some influence.

It is true that Nimrod Theatre had a financially attractive chance to do *Fatty Yellow* earlier this year? If so, why did they not risk a production of a new play, one going for mixed old play like *The Honouring Office*? Nimrod is supposed to be on the side of Australian dramatists. Considering such difficulties one wonders whether it is worth all the trouble or whether Dorothy Hewitt should return from theatrical writing as White has done for some time.

My comparisons between Dorothy Hewitt and Patrick White are by no means absolute. Both have turned from other forms to the play, and both have experimented with historical imagery and a wide range of styles. The combination of historical and self-righteous female characters is similar, and Mr Hewitt admits to admiring White's work grandly. Most of all, there's been some playwrights writing well ahead of their time and their like comic staff with subversive humor is evident in *The New Funeral* and *Deaf People* conversations about war in the Banner household are technically reminiscent of those in the backyards of San Francisco and the expert timing of both playwrights as they cut from conversation to conversation is impressive for its theatrical consciousness. It is not slightly known as to whether we lost a major playwright in Patrick White, it is clear that the loss of an audience Dorothy Hewitt would be disastrous. It is easy to see why Patrick White might not have compromised much in the theatrical climate of the 60's. It is depressing that Dorothy Hewitt has to do so in 1978.



Dorothy Hewitt on the set of *A Fatty Show*. Photo: Oliver Frank

RODNEY FISHER is a New South Wales law lecturer and on leave for a production of *Myth of the Machine*. A few paragraphs which discuss the film *SA* are over.

"I think they thought I would be able to make a speech because I would be too busy crying into a lace handkerchief in a park spot." Dorothy Hewitt told a cheering audience after a night like four other similarly short which had been staged to help raise funds for her. And she was right. For although many of the twenty one people participating in *A Fatty Show* had not known of Dorothy Hewitt when they agreed to lend their services for the benefit, on that Sunday night everyone was doing a "for Dorothy" and the subsequent joyful mood of solidarity for an Australianist or refused both performers and audience alike. Such a gift required a heavy gesture and Dorothy's next dialogue. Her voice broke the speeches were quickly over and options engaged in a ceremonial response to Margaret Roodlight's rendition of Bob Hutton's *Local Song*.

Dorothy Hewitt after the show with Neil Christie (M.I.C.) George Ogden (M).

Photo: Oliver Frank



A TRIBUTE TO

Rodney Fisher

Post and plowshare, and in either case an end of major importance. Dorothy Hewitt was a writer by her husband's Perth barrister David Hewitt for a poem *The Unwritten Guest*, which was in 1969 and which appeared in a volume of her poetry *Remembered* in Australia published in 1976. For almost a year the pressure of the pending suit (sister-in-law Dorothy Hewitt's creative security and diminished her writing output. She is a poet of about 40,000 in September in Katherine Brisbane's words. Every creative writer in Australia has reason to be grateful to Dorothy Hewitt. She has taken a load off their shoulders by writing out of court the label system brought against her. The attorney looked very much like a steady legal president with several reasons for his freedom of expression. For the artist's work is not a work of art but is failures in that is the author's obviously very personal vision of life interpreted of repeating through the material life around him.

Certainly, for Dorothy Hewitt writing is not so much an art to be practiced as an immediate extension of her own life and consciousness. Every attempt at precision which has had is a kind of the subconscious which has its own rules and its own truth.

Talking to Dorothy Hewitt was in February glimpsing her eager, idealistic, optimistic child within. The child's need to seek in her own experience her best Dorothy Hewitt finds on a course of non-conformity: emotional sexual, political—all her life and has had three her to throw her nose at narrow conventions, to shake her family, to attempt suicide to sweep one out of domestic hell for another, to join the Communist Party and most of all to discover an individual and flexible voice to illuminate her own experience.

A Fatty Show was presented by Penny Unwin Productions, also for a similar idea Dana Morgan and Suzanne Rouse. The idea of doing something for Dorothy had

DOROTHY

occurred to them as far back as June but the case needed some sort of resolution before the idea was to get their supporters' momentum to be launched as a definite project. When the case was settled, a date was fixed five weeks ahead and the recruitment of artists and technical contributors was launched. Paddy Limited Production to my beloved Wai Ching and myself to direct the show, or rather to supervise the last minute co-ordination of artists. Sydney stage manager Ian McGrath was friendly in Adelaide and looking for extra. With the aid of Julieanne Robinson, the South Australian Theatre Company's artistic director, he managed to take on the role of Stage Director Chris Pater from the Adelaide Festival Centre volunteered as Technical Director. A large bank on wine gathered around these three.

Most rehearsal centred on the presentation of songs but, as inspired by Dorothy Hewett, Robyn Archer used beautiful words as lyrics for original songs - In Monks Street and "Forsaken Marmalade". Dave Galloway set the poem "You Gave Me Hyacinths First A Year Ago" under the title "Stranger's Room" and he played piano when the band accompanied Penny Sparrow in its first performance. Margaret Roadnight in two Hewett numbers

were Sailor Home From The Sea, and Island In The Sky" - young Adelaide composer Ian Cawson created a beautiful setting for "Last Summer" - sung by The Security Company and the multi-talented baritone of John Wood was wonderfully right for Mervyn Drake's standard ballad setting of Bon Bon and Home for Dolly. Jude Kung, leaving and lurching, twenty part in hand presented Laura Daskin from The Old Man Caper. Penny Sparrow with Patrick Thomas Tom, Debra Grey read three poems "Underneath the Arches", "Last Summer" and "Miss Hewett's Story" - this last performed with Craig Ashley and Jo England.

The rest of the programme was largely a matter of artists giving the best of their current repertoire. And there were extra bonuses: like The Security Company and Robyn Archer singing Dylan in the foyer an interim show. Now Circus taking the face of the front three rows with an all too intimate bit of the singing, and quite a deal of dancing in the aisles.

Many supporters in support for Dorothy Hewett came with love and solidarity from around Australia: from George Dylan, Terry Frewin, A.D. Hope, Tony Morisset, Tim Buntell, Ben Patterson, Susan Graham Bond, Graham Bundeill, Garrie Hutchinson, George Gervais, Pat Leach, Bruce Perry, Jim Shumlin, David Williamson, Professor Manning Clark and Katherine Bradburn. A statement from Peggy Seeger and Ewan MacColl came in as of their special appearance on the bill. They had also made a statement on Dorothy Hewett's behalf the night before at their Adelaide concert and were unable to stay for A Party Show because of publicity commitments in Perth. Seeger's Bob Hudson made the greatest impact on the audience with his

statement: "This is the land of cottage that could only happen here in Russia and times like that I only wish I lived in a free country like Australia."

Well what, apart from an atmosphere of friendly harmony and what about A Party Show? For Dorothy Hewett it means that, in Adelaide, hundreds of people have learned about her for the first time and, hopefully, her writing also. It means \$1,200 towards her \$4,000 debt. For the audience it meant a sustained, inexpensive night of mostly top class local entertainment with the added pleasure of Margaret Roadnight in superb voice. For anyone who cares about the fate of the Australian artist, it meant a ray of hope - in a country which treats its writers and artists with a painful, bitter lack of understanding and consideration, a point and playwright was celebrated with love and respect. One cannot begin to think those two plays of Adelaide poetry. Dawson and Dutton were unwilling to participate.

But if, despite the best theatre show for Dorothy Hewett would be handmade, professional production of her vital, challenging, unique play by Australia's major theatre companies. What company will consider Bon Bon and Home for Dolly in The Party House. Stay for its first season? Please. If offer me someone for a picture if anyone's interested.

A PARTY performed by Philip Lancelot Productions at the Adelaide Theatre Hall 17th 1980.
Director: Neil Cherry and Graham Fraser.
Production: David Mackay and Graham Fraser.
With: Margaret Roadnight, Robyn Archer, Jude Kung, George Dylan, John Wood, David King, Patrick Thomas, Penny Sparrow, Ian Cawson, Henry James, Ross Galloway and the Jane Davis, Ryan Graham, Marlene Bradburn, Tonya, Matthew, Lesley, Tony and Sharon, Australia Loan, local choruses, Bob Leach, Craig Galloway, Kevin Bailey, Robert Barker, Nina Cawson and The Security Company.



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Thirty years ago Brodsky formed Actors Services in Milwaukee weekly publishing guidebook. Hundreds involved in presenting multitude of attractions. There was difficulty Green Knapp Wendell Nevill the Ventnor Club Maine later in a glassware show. Eugene Tucker Dave Brodsky, the Black and White Musical Show Joyce Gravel the Reading Marlowe Deutsch Ben O'Neil. Contemporary, Teller Show in the Sand. Anna Neagle, Doris Hanning, Jack Johnson, Panchanga, Charles Gray, Carol Channing, Goddard, Susan



William H. Miller, Jr. has been associated with the

might be a moment from the masses of people who would just shut. Many of it is a dreamer, it is likely to be of the culture that have appeared to J.C.W. in the past. In the past, that have been given money-makers. But also he will be making new ventures, of which the world premiere of *More Canterbury Tales* the first in association with the Old Yale Theatre Company he is commencing. Ron Blair to write a comedy based on the events surrounding the ending of the White Labour Government by the Governor General. In addition there is under consideration a musical written by Australians about a legendary international historical figure. Brodzia suggests another is to mount the world premiere of an Australian created musical good enough to later be staged in London and New York.

(Paradoxically John McCullum before he resigned, had been planning world premieres in Australia. One he negotiated was *Shogun*

which, based on the oddplay *Play of Shogun* by who he is credited to originate, Lewis Eggers, a writer. With McCullum's resignation, that the idea never got off the ground and when the musical was eventually laid out in America with Barbara Kitz - it flopped.)

Other plans mulled over by Ron Brodzia included the Australian production of the American musical *A Chorus Line*, the co-writing of Johnny Bench and John Anderson (an heir return from plays given in the West End) in an American musical and bringing back the successful drag duo, Hips and Brodzia (Hips, Puffs and George Logan) to join the two old ladies in a revival of *A Little and Old Love*.

High on the list of ideas come to be staged was the naughty English sex comedy *Funny Peculiar* and English TV star Richard (After About the Musical *Q's* lives in a revival) the fierce dancing *Boyz n the City* about place for Henry (David) Jones, running and also be back to

play again in *Why Don't You Stop For Breakfast* in those cases, he did not want to let, and in a new comedy for those capitals who have already seen him.

At Melbourne's Comedy with strong presence Phil Miller (and his family), will be presenting three attractions: Douglas Fairbanks Jr in *The Phantom of the Opera*, British comic Jimmy Logan in his new show as Henry Laiden, and a show of all being negotiated.

Footnote: Two on J.C.W. Theatre Ltd executives have already launched action on their own. (Holly) Burgess has established a new company *Georgie's Comedy* Pty Ltd, to present tours of classical and popular (but not "pop") international and Australian entertainers. And Geoff Sanders, who was director of publicity (also presenting American female impersonator Craig Russell at Melbourne's Pantomime Theatre for a short season, and has plans for importing other overseas entertainers).

There is little pleasure in writing about someone who has no a great deal to say. Your interview can only discover what not to say.

So I will not speak of Ron Brodzia a close friend. On about the day that he had in New York last new year's eve. And I would not dare reveal that Brodzia believes Bob Dylan lacks universal respect and further, possesses a bad act.

But right there is the genius. Kinn makes it quite clear that he would insist on Dylan again of some other entertainment, less top billing. What an extraordinary man is K.B.

He is finally flatteringly suggest by behind the scenes, but out front as a performer, he does the best work and entertainment in the local area. When I left my morning job in the *Major Show*, we were discussing the suggestion as Kinn brought a Herald in Collins Street, Melbourne Herald: "let I think you should go on the dole". Then with his little boy grin in a cheeky, full mouth, he walked off and said that I had not been smart enough to get his last word.

Figuring the man as so difficult as starting a Nelson Mandela in Washington. If he has a mind like a razor blade then I have one like a flint disposable shaver. When he says "Surrounded becomes peace. An eye witness has reported that at his residence looked in wonder at the window of his second floor office one peaceful afternoon as Kinn had a multi-colored complexion.

But Kinn has mentioned the Brodzia was there all unknowingly. Apparently the best old days have come or last gone and K.B. screams only when he needs to.

He stomps a writer. My first laugh? On the very first instance as a promising teenage writer in a school he wrote an essay entitled *Offensive Success in Life's first years* (Shave first) his proud grin must have widened at the simplicity of this young man for he remarked in an, a contemporary effort and remember the golden rule, there is always room on top!

Young Brodzia studied law, eagerly not necessarily to attain a degree, but in order to become without doubt the very best criminal man in the local and overseas. I suspect not so local. (How business structure. His parents were return by untried when Ron left in one, in that time decided not to take his degree after five expensive years had cleared the matter by saying, "I will not live."

I believe that Kinn changed his last name sometime after he left the air force where he flew as a navigator. It was during his time with

KINN BRODZIA

A personal profile

by Ian Buckland

the R.A.F. that he discovered New York and Broadway. A most exciting time. His first visit to the city in his eleventh year had already fixed his career idea. He saw *Chu Chin Chew* at Sydney's Grand Opera House later to become the Todd and even later a bar and an office lack.

As you see this story form, you will notice a pattern given at one of his career blocks, softly set in the West. Here is an example in London with the air force, he was a show and enjoyed its popularity. He arrived back in Sydney, taken leave without pay and because he was sent to Melbourne where he hoped to sell the show to David Mann. His Todd. The name of the show simply in did not have been better for the future master of belly-bug expertise. Imagine Brodzia saying to Mann:



Colleen Barrett at David Mann's production of the hit musical *Poppa*

I've got a show for you! *Get A Load Of This THAT'S ITS NAME!*

Mann took him immediately and K.B. hung up his wings and stepped on a jet rocket. He moved to Melbourne, "I love it" and after one year with the Todd he got up *Acet Services* and began operating as the publisher of a comic idea which had not been used before. The weekly booklet was called *Highlights* at Melbourne and detailed the events and announcements offered by the city. In 1948 the writing of such a book must have been a new trick but its success soon proved to other things, encouraged by one of the theatrical legends, Sir Benjamin Fuller. Acet soon became the premier offering. Kinn bought at the King's Theatre, Kinn decided to drop his publishing work although I have a letter from his office dated 1958 which reads, *Acet Services*. Publishers. His writings are listed as a collector's item.

Today, K.B. says so much to his credit, will mention a well-earned fascination for things fantastic. Our mutual friend in Los Angeles, columnist Mark Wages, gave Kinn a magic course last year and in this day, tricks are produced in the Middle East. An at home with the matter is much more than delight but Kinn was one of the other men who never looks, but serves exquisite Mexican fare and always gives the privilege of alcohol and tobacco. Though I wouldn't advise you try the country equivalent, some of these are even older than vintage Acet, perhaps.

He is in extremely clean health which is quite remarkable. Not drinking smoking or going out on much. The newly built hand always run with a place to swim in good weather and he has friends with a golf course perhaps one hundred and fifty metres south of his. They sometimes signal one another by switching lights on and off.

His lounge room has several knick-knacks which reflect an amazing eye for beauty. Little chromed toys being antique and there is a cleverly platformed floor which allows a tinkling panorama of the Melbourne scene. "I'm just down one day and noticed the floor had to be built up by ten inches or so."

He formally for some a most casual only. Heated that you're not going to catch me arguing with it. He says, "Never put it out and someone who you can do today."

Brodzia arrives at work close to ten a.m. and leaves at a quarter past five. He is able to switch off the minute that he believes he will functional office. If you call him through a

swathbands which even Alexander Graham Bell would have thought exceeded his at all. "A very busy man?" His staff of four permanent fixers are devoted to both his private and open drunkenness. "Lurl, his private secretary (who should be writing this piece) has been there for twenty-one years. There is no doubt she would crawl over broken footlights in service. She's Howard's oldest sister and now Anne's general manager. It is a strange young man who follows an imposing line of hair appointments. Robert Ginn, chief general manager, battles his wily past that tale to become Kern's cool and collected B.C. Helen, superproducer, the girl in the outer office gets an extra going up to herself. She was fired, but so much for her abilities, but for the fact that she has the great delight in producing her name. In fact he couldn't stop giggling all day.

I'm sure that Kern agreed to this piece only because he knew I would write it anyway. Why do you want an interview? You know all about me! He also knows that there is no reason why I would rough him up in print because there is nothing about his character to really dislike. It is almost as though he is showing a charming little joke with us all. But even so he would not give me a place to face interview and suggested that a telephone call would suffice. "How your questions really?"

During our telephone conversation, he talked but once after laughily admitting, "I'm very happy I'm well adjusted, away from here!" Believe me, he is. But when pushed further into more delicate areas, he said, "I was the squishy today. I'll have to go soon."

He did, however, tell me of his dream Australian musical which will be produced next year. It is from a book of some notoriety and in the mold of *Peter Pan* or *Q. J. J.* He says the incident left a mark on the course of

Australian history and that the theatrical adaptation will leave another. I do know Kern is deeply hostile about his love for Australia and its countless people.

The revelation of his all Australian musical in fact, two aspects of the truth he told I at probably the last theatrical secret you will learn from the artist. You'll just have to wait for further details, the man has no reason to reveal more. Yes, I could have bullied him into it, but we must remember that part of the Broadway legend is framed in his ability to use blank double talk. I think a lot of them I want to disclose anything. Here is a sample of Anne's non-verse in reply to a typically staged question: Will Anne's Broadway take be successful?

He came back was rapid-fire. "There are many ways to gauge success, from box office success, to success through scenic design. In all history success has been a matter of opinion. *Superstar* was a success, but many expert opinions might not be a success on stage. But he never declines to comment.

The world premiere of *More Canterbury Tales* took place at the Majestic Theatre, Melbourne on October 22 and is the first production of his newly formed company J.C. Williamson Productions Ltd. The New Kern Kern is, as a result of his new commitment, heavily overworked, but only very slightly a different man. A Broadway helper definitely observed a touch more protocol in his conversations, but you would have to know him very well to notice the change.

Martin Barker, the man who put the first *Canterbury Tales* on stage in other countries, is writing Australia to direct and create a world first for Anne. He goes on the explanation: "Kern is a very persuasive man, and he has the idea to open the new show in Melbourne. But I wanted to do it here for many reasons. I'd

heard such favorable reports of Jimmy Lockwood's performance in the initial production and see all my good working with several talented Australians in London. Kern says: "There were months and months of talking and work. Talking talking talking! I did it by persistence, the strength that this trust in me because I wanted to do it in this."

Upon my suggestion that he could not open on a better day being than October 22 also because the last rehearsal can't be held. "Two world firsts on the one day! One you can see, one you can't!"

Brooks will, with a shove and a push, attract the public to his theatre and here's how he intends to do it. By giving them what they want. By keeping a step ahead. Just remember, we are listening to a man who knows who is on the telephone before he picks it up. Sometimes.

Oh there is so much more to tell. Like the call he received from a late New Yorker. "Kern, do you think you'll ever find another Kerley?" He reply was subtly enigmatic. There there are stories of his personal life to tell from some of the world's greatest stars who have personally worked for Kern without a written contract and purely on a gentleman's agreement. I can tell you from experience how the struggle on Broadway adds him and how his objectives upon his name. Oh yes and wouldn't it like to reveal the master plan for Jimmy Kern's which is going to have a smash figure outcome.

Now, let's have the last session for a most stimulating human being. Kern, if someone were to write a musical about the life times and humor of Kern Brooks, would Miller and Eppley put the money up?

"They'd laugh and And would it make money?"
(Curtain fall)



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DIRTY LINEN

by TOM STOPPARD

Australian premiere of a brilliant farce on the hypocrisy of randy politicians and journalists. A select committee of MPs are meeting to investigate the immorality of members.

"Someone's going through the ranks like a lawnmower in knickers!" - *Shades of Christing Keeler, the Profumo Affair, Aussie Gatto and June Morou. Stoppard has worked as a political journalist and says of them.*

"There is swag as collection of hypocritical, self-important, bullying, shoddily printed sick bags as you'd hope to find in a month of Sundays, and dailies, and the weeklies aren't much better."

"This is fertile, iterate high farce" - *Irvine Wardle, The Times, London*
Cast includes JOHN GADEN, RALPH COTTERILL, ROBERT DAVIS, ALAN TOBIN, WILLIAM NAGLE, ELIZABETH MORTISON as the minute secretary Miss Gotschard, and JOHANA PIOTT.

Director is Ken Horler.

The DIRTY LINEN moves from Nimrod Downstairs from Tuesday, 7th December

The I.A.C. a distribution assistance to the performing arts, it stresses the need for subsidies, provided the arts are educating (being disseminated) being innovative. To this extent the report potentially provides for a large stimulus to the performing arts; however, by seeing these activities as an alternative to the present functions of the performing arts, it negates the benefit, and suggests a complete redundancy of the performing arts.

The economic basis of the report is that the existing performing arts only entertain their audience and there is no economic justification for subsidising the private pleasure of these consumers. If this pleasure purely a private benefit, then the consumers must be prepared to pay the full cost of their pleasure or go without. There would be little disagreement with this economic grounds of the benefits from the arts were purely private, and if the market mechanism was not impeded in meeting the wishes of these consumers. It is on both of these points that the conclusions of the report can be criticised.

The Commissioners argue that the arts can provide entertainment, education and cultural awareness, the latter being provided through instruction and dissemination. Education and cultural awareness are accepted as benefits to society (public benefits) and are worthy of subsidy in contrast to entertainment which is a private benefit. Unfortunately, the Commissioners destroy their own case by arguing that pp 81 and 89 that entertainment provides an important stimulus to education and cultural awareness. To this extent it is difficult to see how they can maintain that entertainment provides purely private benefits and there is a public benefit flowing from entertainment when a subsidy is warranted.

The report lists great stress on the notion that consumer preference are best satisfied in the market place. This is only true to the extent that (a) no public benefits are provided by the goods for there will not be recognised in the market and so the output will be less than the desirability, and (b) the market is operating perfectly. It is unlikely that the market for the output of the performing arts is perfect (very few markets are, if any at all), and this can be confirmed by at least one example. A perfect market requires consumers to have perfect knowledge of their own satisfaction of the good in question and in the report notes the lack of education in the arts prevents many people being fully aware of the benefits of the arts from the arts. This is especially true of the public sector benefits arising from increased cultural awareness. The arts need to be subsidised at the same time as people are educated and a cultural awareness develops, for only then can people really express their preferences through the market. Education and a greater cultural awareness are one and the same but are integral parts of the existing performing arts framework.

Another problem is raised by the report's recommendation that assistance should be divided between art forms. To the extent that all art forms are to be equally available, unequal amounts of money may have to be allocated, because X may cost more per person attending than Y. This is neutrality in terms of availability but not in terms of funds allocation. If funds are allocated equally between X and Y, we may have plenty of Y but little or none of X. This would give neutrality in terms of funds

AN ECONOMIST'S VIEW OF THE I.A.C. REPORT

allocation but not in terms of availability. I've accepted that the present framework should be supported until consumer preferences can start to be allocated through the market (maybe fifteen rather than five years) then equal availability is the relevant criterion.

From an economist's viewpoint, any area of debate in the report is the treatment accorded to the benefits of the arts. The Commissioners contend that they could not objectively determine the extent of any public benefits although they were prepared to accept the benefits of education and cultural awareness on subjective grounds.

It is not clear who they accept these and not others, but apart from that, they objectively measure issues in light of the cost only. Clearly the cost of a particular good is only relevant when compared to the benefits accruing from that good, and comparisons based on cost alone can be invalid.

Of course the Commissioners might object that no one provided objective benefits that could be matched against costs. Some evidence was tendered in the report that they and they chose to ignore it without reason. In any case, one can never be objective about the information of public benefits for by definition they are subjective. One can investigate and quantify the extent to which people feel their welfare is altered by these benefits, and this is a highly public convenience available. The larger one's public benefits of any government policy, be it benefits on steel or textiles, or subsidies to the arts, can only be objectively assessed in this way.

Much has been made in the press of two points in the report. The first is the claim that the arts subsidies to the Australian Opera were equivalent to 41.0-52.2 percent and the other 87 per cent is calculated when the Australian Opera performs at the Sydney Opera House (page 103). This does not mean as many commentators have stated, that opera costs are subsidised nearly 87 per cent. Even if one accepts the argument, it only refers to one opera company (although the largest) in one location. In any case it is only valid to include the additional 87 if the Opera House was built for opera performances (which it clearly was not) and if cheaper and better performances did not exist (which they do). In fact, it can be argued that opera costs are subsidised the national monument built by the NSW State Government which would otherwise be a waste of money.

The second point often mentioned in the press is the footnote on page 103 that direct subsidies to the Australian Opera and the ABTO Symphony Orchestra total more than \$11,000 per employee. This does not mean that all employees in the performing arts are subsidised to this extent, for any case such a

comment is only meaningful if one also states the argument that the subsidy is necessary to preserve employment. This cost per employee still has to be compared to the benefit per employee. Perhaps it has any purpose and although the report did not make this comparison, at least it was mentioned in connection with the preservation of employment argument. Unfortunately many commentators have used this figure to justify their assertion that subsidies are too high and this is completely invalid. It would be matter if the subsidy was \$1 million per employee provided the benefits to society exceeded this cost.

The report adopts a contradictory stance on the effect of its recommendations on employment in the arts. On page 28 they claim that this is unclear, yet on page 89 they assert that a modest unemployment rate is clearly. This is difficult to reconcile with their argument that one reason for saving costs of the arts is that they use a high proportion of labour in performance and that this is cutback in our society. The recommendation is that new forms requiring less labour and more capital are required (Lloyd's 81). Consequently unemployment of artists must rise in the short term unless new ways must can be adopted into education, or (b) they can easily find other non-arts jobs or (c) the output of the new flows will expand rapidly and so require the same quantity of labour as before. All these appear unlikely within the five years set by the Commissioners for the phasing out of existing subsidies and therefore a rise in unemployment would be a likely consequence of the full implementation of the report.

There are many strange and unexplained statements in the report. For instance it is assumed that the main criterion for assessing preferences for live music against those for recorded music is the technical quality of live reproduction. The more technically perfect performance is assumed to be better and therefore the report asserts that people will prefer recorded concerts and to live performances. No evidence is given for this value judgement.

The report is disappointing in many ways. It is often contradictory, it abounds in unsupported statements and a weak economic analysis in a far too general manner. Ultimately all government policies are based on a belief that society's welfare is improved by such policies. Some objective evidence can be tendered in support of this but there will always be a certain element of subjectivity. By continually attacking this element in the case for support to the performing arts, the Commissioners have gone dangerously close to burying the demands they possess beneath a pile of manure.



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Marlie Thiersch

CERTAIN WOMEN IN NEARLY 200 YEARS OF AUSTRALIAN THEATRE

The *Alba* (a contemporary diatribe, to be given for a play of literary merit by an Australian woman writer to mark the 50th anniversary of the opening of Women Writers Museum) is the current competition for a play which is 'suitable' for professional presentation. With it goes a prize of \$1,000 donated by the New South Wales Government.

The Pioneer Players in 1922 (though directed by these men) were probably the first theatre group to present plays by women writers. By 1940 women playwrights for the stage and for radio broadcasting were in full competition with men and Linda Stavek mentions several names in her book *The Making of Australian Drama* (A & B 1973). Among them is Gwen Meredith, author of the famous *Blue Hills ABC* serial, now also concluded.

The advent of the play, now plays received only one if any, production and were published quickly went out of print again. Fortunately the situation has now improved due to the renaissance of the Australian Theatre and the current Marlie Thiersch Organisations of playwrights, in the case of women writers, to the birth of the feminist movement.

In Betty Burwell's case the credit for her indigenous playwrighting a heavily stocked into the women in their stage plays *Mitochondria's La Mamma* - the coffee-house theme for new women which is one of the central American lady Betty Burwell's book *Women's Rights* around the world. Since last year, that collective members of the *Women's Theatre Group* who, as well as perform in their own shows at the Free Factory in Carlton, Melbourne. Plays by Betty Burwell, Katherine Swannell, Patricia Mary Dwyer, Deborah Richardson, Barbara Sullivan, Amy Conington, Betty Quinn and Joanne Hooper have been produced and/or published in the last few years and have won playwrights such as Dorothy Hewett, Alecia Green, Kerry Power and Jennifer Barton have had plays performed and published.

There just aren't enough good parts for actresses. Men get the good parts, was the complaint that roused New Zealand actress playwright and feminist Jennifer Conington in 1974 to write *No Man's Land* which led with John Howard's *Australian Women's Progress* as a playwrighting contest and was first performed at Sydney's National Theatre in 1975. It was this year published by Currency

Books. Though featured on the front cover and inside in the *Journal of General* University of New South Wales in February 1979, it was the Australian Centre of the International Theatre Institute and was awarded the Australian for a theatre of the development of the theatre.

Marlie Thiersch's title changed to *Coastline* because of Peter's play *At the Edge of the World* premiered in London last year with a cost of four million.

Though not as playwrights and after the first trial of the century, women have always played leading parts on the stage and screen.

After an earlier *Teatime* play show bushrangers, the first truly Australian play - with an indigenous theme and setting and written and produced locally - was *The Currency* (1974) by *My Mother's Country* (1974) played at Edward George's (the very lovely year) in the 1970s. Female actresses in a coaching situation and played the currency role and later the only play in the new and

produced the first play of the century.

The first production *Alba* (1974) was the first Australian play to be produced by the Pioneer Players in 1922. It was the first play to be produced by the Pioneer Players in 1922. It was the first play to be produced by the Pioneer Players in 1922.

Elise Wiseman is now sometimes called *Aurora* (the first leading lady although she was born in England). She was only sixteen when she began her acting career at Sydney's first theatre, the *Lyceum Theatre*, in 1922.

She was the first Australian actress to be produced in London and New York. She was the first Australian actress to be produced in London and New York. She was the first Australian actress to be produced in London and New York.

The *Alba* (1974) was the first Australian play to be produced by the Pioneer Players in 1922. It was the first play to be produced by the Pioneer Players in 1922. It was the first play to be produced by the Pioneer Players in 1922.

Major Murray and his wife, the first Australian actress to be produced in London and New York. She was the first Australian actress to be produced in London and New York. She was the first Australian actress to be produced in London and New York.

Two of Australia's best-known stage actresses are the *Alba* (1974) and the *Alba* (1974). They were the first Australian actresses to be produced in London and New York. They were the first Australian actresses to be produced in London and New York.



With *Alba* Photo: John Collins

emigrating to London around 1880, they both died in a ship, near 1920, in Sydney. Two days before their deaths, the couple's only child, a married couple, had been born in the same London district later to be named a close relationship with George Melrose, who was with Arthur Gurney and J.C.W. The Trenchard ship in 1881 only became known as The Firm. Melrose, Melrose and Louis Philippe, Duke of Orleans, in London in 1880 and 1881 followed her to St. Petersburg, where they traveled together to Vienna. Melrose's alleged husband died for disease and through the case was sent to Paris, Louis Philippe's son-in-law to Africa and later returned an Austrian aristocrat. Melrose came back to Australia to become George Melrose in 1918 in recognition of his work for his country.

Another Nollie was the popular vaudeville artist Nollie Koffe, who appeared on many Austrian music hall stages in 1930s and 40s, not sparing her spell over audiences into old age.

Nellie Bramley made her debut with age of beauty in *Blue Spots* before the turn of the century. She had her own company in the early 1920s and it is said to have been a smooth performer and trouper in every sense of the word. Together with Marie Wray she is mentioned in the ads by James McAden which was spoken by Dame Sybil Thorneike at the opening of the *East-Indian Theatre* in 1916 and which began: "Has a Dream to see to live and now once more she breathes, she walks, she dances, she lives!"

Between the years 'our Great or 'Australia's Queen of Song', Gladys Moncrieff was the best

one of the musical comedy age. Her most famous role was *The Merry Widow* in which she first appeared in 1910 and once again in 1942 before coming to Surfers Paradise where she died in 1975. She apparently gave wonderful parties with a generous tasteless and killer black dresscode over which, for which she was awarded the D.B.E.

Two scores of girls miss theatrical stardom, graduates who've sold a dozen pair of ears in their own right were Viola Wilson who married St. Patrick Tag, and Kitty Carroll who was the wife of Garnett H. Carroll (he studied to be the wife of Mo' (Ray Baker) wife Bessie Coker - a Irish schoolmate and Bob Dyer - a Irish Dolly was formerly also a Irish showgirl). Another well-known Irish performer was Dorothy Daily Foster, the versatile radio comedienne and actor. www4.net

Several Australian women have had scoring success abroad, such as Maggie Ryan, Zoe Caldwell, Judith Anderson, Jane Jago, Donna Ciano and, more recently, Darlene Johnson and young Joanne McCallum, the daughter of George Willern, who though English, was herself a popular stage success in Australia.

It is not true that either Lolo, Mona, Sarah Bernhard, Anna Pavlova, Anne Russell, Marlene Dietrich or Alida are Australian, though they are among the many female cyclists who have greatly contributed to the attractiveness of Agassiz's theme over the years to their want in these shores.

Many kinds of plants. These are sometimes called
also succulent plants. Some are used as food.



a re-thinking of the fire fighting techniques now employed. To ensure the safety of fire fighters, they must be aware of the problems likely to be encountered and be adequately protected against them. Breathing apparatus and protective clothing should be worn at all but the very minor incidents.

It must be remembered that the toxic gases can be absorbed through the skin and that the Threshold Limit Values of the gases involved are lower than the face mask leakage of a breathing apparatus as required by the British Standards Institution (that is 800 p.p.m).

Whenever possible, therefore, fire fighting should be undertaken from open air and, in cases of multi-storey buildings must be immediately evacuated.

When the Fire Brigade is faced with problems of this sort in starting fires, then can you imagine how much greater is the problem for you and me?

HEAT

When a building or a compartment of a building is completely involved in a fire, it is not unusual to encounter temperatures in the range of 1500° F. to 2000° F.

The time/temperature tolerance for second degree burns, established by authoritative studies, have shown that the same degree of damage will occur after

- 5 hours @ 110°
- 35 seconds @ 130°
- 1 second @ 150° F

Having regard to these heat limitations of human tolerance it obviously follows that unless the fire fighter can attack the fire in its incipient stage, it will very quickly establish a situation that will preclude the possibility of attack from inside the building. In fact, the N.F.P.A. Fire Protection Handbook suggests that firemen should not enter atmospheres exceeding 1200° - 1300° without special protective equipment. It is fully to be hoped that this is a policy that is not so haphazardly applied as it probably around 1984.

PREVENTIVE MEASURES

As with most fire prevention measures better than none. Therefore, we should establish some simple but straightforward preventive measures that will protect both our place of employment and ourselves.

It is essential that once the fire prevention measures are established they be consistently policed to ensure their efficiency in emergencies. All occupants should be encouraged to report matters constituting a potential hazard.

Typical points to watch for are:

1. Accumulation of litter. Good housekeeping is essential. Waste materials should be collected regularly and stored in a safe place whilst awaiting disposal.
2. Placement of furniture. Loose scenery set must not be where it will obstruct exit to the stage so emergency equipment such as extinguishers and hose reels.
3. Fire doors should be tested regularly for function. When an area is unoccupied they should be closed. Never lock fire doors open. If you have a requirement to consistently use that exit, perhaps you should consider fitting a fusible link which allows the door to close automatically in the event of fire.
4. The discharge of an extinguisher, either purposefully or accidentally must be reported to a responsible member of the Emergency Staff. This person should be designated as a person assigned to the



J.C. Williamson's *For Majesty's Splendour*

Photo: John Fairfax & Sons Ltd

equipment.

5. Flammable or explosive materials should only be permitted into the building in small quantities, and under controlled conditions.

6. Staff members should be regularly warned of the rules regarding use of possible sources of ignition - e.g. matches, radiators, candle adaptors.

7. Acquaint yourself with the nearest and various fire escape exits and routes. Make this an automatic action when ever you enter any complex. Should the occasion arise when you are involved in a fire, then there are only three golden rules to remember:

- a. Leave the alarm.
- b. Attack the fire with first aid appliances ONLY if there is no immediate danger to life.

and evacuate the involved area.

CONCLUSION

Finally, may I suggest that very valuable instructions and/or for motion can be gained from these sources:

1. The Victorian State Emergency Service conducts a four hour course at their headquarters in St. Kilda Road. The course is repeated each six to twelve weeks, and then a re-charge.

2. The Metropolitan Fire Brigade produces a booklet (upon, head called Guide Lines for Emergency Procedures in Multi-Storey Buildings). The principles here are just as applicable to theatres.

and

3. The Insurance Council of Australia will, on request inspect and advise your premises relative to hazards. This is also a great service.



Regional Theatre, South Perth

Photo: The Age

Film, Television, Radio

THE MIND'S EAR

David Chandler

Genre Overlap is a feature item for the Australian Broadcasting Commission in the radio, film, and television departments. It is written by Executive Producer of the ABC's weekly programme for new radio writing, *Genre Overlap* (ABC House, Sydney, or House 1, Los Angeles) and is a feature item for the ABC's radio, film, and television departments.

"The thing that appeals to me most about radio is its accessibility. It seems to me that the writer is never hemmed in. Everything is open to him. Making the whole world of imagination to work from. Radio is also a media which is the most accessible to the imagination."

Celia Frow

A radio coverage of the recent solar eclipse would probably not have captured a particular radio audience. And at the risk of alienating my colleagues in the ABC's radio departments, I've never seen much reason in radio broadcasts of spectacular events. Rather like listening to the opening night of the Australian Ballet at the Sydney Opera House. The music may be pleasant enough, but the words don't come across at all.

Qualitative statements and comparisons about film, radio and television have always appeared specious to me — like all those tired old gags about Melbourne and Sydney weather.

But having worked in theatre, film and television, I feel at least competent to make some sort of educated, objective statement about the state of the medium in which I am presently employed — radio. And, more to the point, Radio Drama and Features.

There still exists in the industry a sort of delirious sort of idealism according to the area in which any one person works. Film for the writer, imaginative and artistic television for those who are of law and know where it's at, and radio for those who can't quite make the grade — or, at least, who register and in the mechanical, abstract sections of intelligence tests.

But what is more important than argument of elements or partisan allegiance is the realization that each medium of its very nature has qualities which are peculiar to it.

No intelligent or unskilled person would argue for one medium that there are times when television is able to present vividly and immediately what no other medium can do. Nor that radio can present with its immediacy and economy what no other medium can do. And equally no sound wouldling would argue for the massive craft of film.

There is no way of knowing if Guglielmo Marconi ever acquainted himself with a troupe of actors. Even if he did, he probably had no idea that within a century there would be broadcasting engineers of the magnitude of those which exist today in the U.S., Europe, the Americas — and Australia.

Wireless messages, both the broadcasting and the receiving became established as more than a news and information service.

It was only a matter of time before the greatest use of the medium was developed. And what better way to develop that service than to introduce the notion of plays on radio. And so a whole new world began. What these still exist, excellent examples of what might loosely be described as vintage radio plays, there is much to make strong men shudder.

Everybody is prepared to fault an Oscar winner — or at least to be photographed with him. Even if he is a person that in retrospect is interesting to note that both laureates and winners alike are impelled by the impermanence of a competing audience. Admittedly some will be impressed by anyone (which is not the same as a reward, but most will be lost to posterity).

Like television (and Motion), Radio and its own children. Such is the evenness of production and presentation. Basically the radio writer has a slight notion of what he is writing for. And, in most cases, he is writing to a time limit. No longer such need, much trouble.

Even now, the form is still strange — still new in the medium. But all the same time there is no way that an actor's voice can be a substitute of television or film. There is too much now in the writing of radio drama that is akin to the economy of film writing.

One of the major problems confronting the radio writer is the fear of language — and the fear of silence. To me, a good radio writer knows the value of both. Words to use and when to keep quiet. A writer, if you like, And who does it all right (asking for a sense of new things) the danger of radio play (and, hopefully, writer) will never be lost.

The true radio play may make some sense about human life which may baffle and delight. But, most of all, they show an awareness of the medium in itself. What does a last day of New York look like?

At base there is the extremely difficult problem of transmitting a medium which depends, views and weather, etc. into one which is purely the real signals of the lives of real men and women.

According to Henry James, "If a woman looks at a man in a certain way, there is drama."



Would that it were so easy. And think of the hours of effortless production that would be afforded us if countless ladies and gentlemen would pass upon us in like fashion.

In short, writers of radio drama employ advanced analogies as well as poetry. And at the same time (if not as well) they engage the latest in mind in standard statements which comfortably — or otherwise — he has not before. Very often it is that statement of otherwise which changes a competent script into a compelling one.

I feel the need here to make some sort of plea for more successful drama. There is no disputing the fact that the industry, the quality of the product is important. We all agree to that. The perfect production will often go by the wayside and the writer will often be the one to make the most of what we have and see the patterns and realize that it is a much spirit of the moment. And, admittedly, there are those who would argue that while it is a very well for people to sit and watch the particular way in which the show has to be to last such things after their living rooms. And I am not making a plea for licence, merely honesty.

Often at seminars and lectures, I am asked how I recognize a good radio script. Good that is as opposed to ordinary or badly conceived. The answer is inevitably — gut. Or, more perhaps, but there is a small blue magical flame, or a feeling of fire in the belly that tells you if it is there, is there. It is not then to amount of genres or production can compete.

So far I have been using the terms radio play and radio drama almost interchangeably. It is probably time to make a distinction. From the outset in Australia, the three, writer, has been asked to regard radio as a medium in its own right. And within one does not wish to denigrate the efforts of those who have come before, new radio writing is vastly different. Technology has a lot to do with it. But there is more.

That is not to say of course, that there is no place for the well crafted, conventional radio play. We still produce them, there is still an audience for them. And in addition we now sometimes called upon to present radio writing (television) of existing theatre pieces.

What I would prefer to concentrate upon is the pure radio work. And it is here that the true radio drama (as distinct from radio play) comes into its own.

In retrospect, the type of work is described as radio play — writing in the air.

you like. The radio-drama piece is an attempt to take words and sounds as words is or described by an author separately for the passage.

There are inbuilt up into something that could not exist on the printed page — a pattern of words and sentences. Words which are manipulated and sounds which illustrate the words in the way the writer, the actor, the hired personnel and producer/director are able to create something which is intensely subjective, and which can be replaced on no other medium.

In 1955 the BBC commissioned *4.48 The Fall* from Samuel Beckett for mime of it. This work represented the first major breakthrough in radio drama. It also went back to the BBC Radiophonic Workshop. The play is largely a monologue and a conversation was devised which gave the movement of an old lady between her home and the railway station. This was done by starting with natural footstep which were then taken up by a sound rhythm. What was the music and sound was heard. The listener knew that the old lady was on the move. She is absorbed in her own thoughts and from time to time reality impinges upon her in the shape of people she knows who meet her on the way. Their approach is indicated by sirens and street sounds which are the beginning of a new scene, which take the old lady into the real sound of, say, a donkey cart or an old motor car.

Such a process, though envisaged could never have been achieved at the time. And in the past twenty years much has been done to refine the concept.

The thing which struck me most last year while going to visit the already primary way in which new methods and approaches to radio production — particularly radio drama — tend

to occur simultaneously is a number of countries techniques developed at the ABC and of which I spoke with a certain amount of pride, had been struck upon at the BBC Radiophonic Workshop and at Radio France's Atelier de creation radiophonique. Would that we had the resources here to do what is regarded in the UK and France as fairly solitary daily routine.

What it does say something about, though, the nature of the medium, and I suggest the type of creative, ingenious mind which is attracted to an oral medium.

I do not intend to spend a lot of time on the technical aspects of radio drama production. I use this article mostly as an introduction. A colleague, Robert Peach has recently returned from a Churchill Fellowship during which he investigated the most recent techniques of radio drama production particularly in Germany which boasts the world's most sophisticated studios. He is at present preparing a report which will appear in a subsequent issue of *Theatre & Music*.

But it would be wrong of me to make at least some passing reference to some of the tools of trade which have made the creative use of the medium more interesting and exciting.

The tape recorder is the first and most obvious invention. One of the days when actors would cluster around a ribbon microphone listening anxiously that had just been completed by an actor-faced writer huddled in a corner of the studio. And all of that has to end!

But the use of tape, mixing and multi-tracking has done a lot to free actors, writers and producers from earlier constraints.

With the promise of FM came the exciting

world of stereophonic radio production. Like anything new, we were all a little daunted by it at first. But it is here, and as listeners to the ABC's FM Network will know, there is an openness, a vast expanse of difference.

The stereophonic production of radio drama also presents a wider world to the actor and director. Plays are based as they would be for the stage in rudimentary sets — or groups of them are provided for the actor, and as long as the actor remembers to walk back into the position in those red. Moves that would be made along diagonals on stage are effected by moving along arcs. Like a painter's compass for straight lines, more oblique for diagonals, or fanning off.

I have included a single play which we give to actors to illustrate the process. It is known at the ABC as *Peach's Petard* — probably because it was Robert Peach, a former actor, who did much to promote the medium in the early days of stereo production.

By way of conclusion I make a plea. No, several. I have always been amazed at the way in which radio drama is neglected by critics. Newspapers, magazines and periodicals will devote endless columns space to the reviewing of film, television, music and theatre. But where does one find intelligent, reasoned, informed comment about radio drama. It's a sad state when a medium which provides so much for the writer, the actor — and the reader can just be omitted.

The second plea? An invitation really. To the listener. It has to do with Colin Fries's words quoted earlier. In radio, the writer is never hemmed in. Nor is the listener. Everything is open to him. He has the whole world of imagination within reach. Radio is so much a realm of the imagination.

Perhaps like the mind a star

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Theatre in Education

M.T.C. T.I.E.

PROGRAMME & PROTEST



The Inexhaustible Tales of the Twilight Sorcerer

Photo M.T.C.

Spoken to most Theatre in Education actors and directors in Australia and the same concerns seem to be repeated: lack of follow up, lack of facilities, lack of interest from the profession, education departments, press, whatever. For the most part the informal system consists of two to four actors, with or without stage management, touring for holidays, making life from home without the infrastructure of an organised group, is disregarded with management, the director, the play, schools etc. even each other.

For all this the Melbourne Theatre Company in 1976 managed to field a second tour company with a policy of bringing theatre to schools and positively with original material conceived for such touring in Australia. To this end we have lived throughout the year *Business* by Richard Braithwaite, *Strange World* and *The Girl by Louis Nowra*, *Paper for the Fall* and *Who's Your Friend?* by Bill Bell. *The Inexhaustible Tales of the Twilight Sorcerer* and *Prosecco* by Mark Rostler and *Queen of Heaven* by Simon Hopkinson. To these were added two overseas works, *John John* by John Heywood and *The Good Doctor* by Neil Simon. The reaction to most of these was good and they were considered useful in the schools.

However, this work has all the aforementioned problems and a continuing assessment breeds the director.

Finally the external problem of touring. Basically there are two factors: stay close to base and go deep or tour extensively and not going too wide, but cover more schools with the work. The only answer would seem to be to go to work and in our case we go on this.

Secondly the internal problem - especially

with new works - of time to rehearse, finding actors who are both motivated and capable and having the resources to present a proper performance. Thus the Theatre in Education director has to be able to create something from slim material as well as teach and coach actors and actually direct work. This calls for well-informed, good young actors who have some internal discipline of acting from which to work. It is immensely important that the director of Theatre in Education be also a teacher of actors. Perhaps our greatest triumph was a performance in Melbourne of a piece devised by the company, played and directed by six members of our own Youth Theatre who have entered the profession.

The nature of the work demands using anti-social performers, our belief in the work demands the children receive drama of the highest possible standard. Here the director needs both time and money to develop his artists and the work.

Finally there is the recurring charge that Theatre in Education is not the realm of the professional theatre. Naturally we believe this. However, the need for good follow up and a continuing relationship with schools over a work may not only be sustained by a closer working relationship with the education authorities. One can hope for a concerted effort with both local funding for staff and access granted to schools?

Presumably we have developed well within our resources but this work has opened eyes that in Victoria at least are still in the state of debate and discussion.

Jonathan Hardy

(With information from after joining Melbourne Theatre Company's Theatre in Education programme that we were to be termed as West. There is no book. The implications of the change involve a loss to learn the much slower and more difficult manner.

Work started in the first term of the year. Our team, one of three, was joining Victorian county schools. We performed twice daily to audiences of one hundred and fifty, mainly in what primary or secondary. As well we conducted long workshops. Due to an audience number of 1000 we were kept for a minimum of 1000 responses. After each show we spent about fifteen minutes in formal discussion, usually opening round as in our work. To follow up work on the themes of the play was available either as printed material or discussion. Our workshops were mostly separate sessions and quite often the students participating in them had to learn the show.

Since 1975 we actors who had made close contact with staff and students at several schools that our feedback into the system would be vital for improvement. So I returned to second term where staff ready to discuss any many ideas.

There is a danger of bringing our show closer to the audience, making greater participation show, selecting audience time, using novel and controversial material and perhaps workshoping play. Follow up could be extended into workshops, discussion and printed material what might after the play an informal 'getting to know the actor' session could take place.

However, second term started with four teams, one stage manager and two teams for each team to rehearse two shows, formal discussions, of our work were not included in our tight schedule, and although I found this stage a little disappointing was held in a room in a rehearsal of our existing policies. Our programme apparently would not hold itself responsible for any kind of education value in our work. Moreover, we wished we had in the schools were restricted in our contribution to the programme by being limited as only actors. Even our discussions were stopped because it was thought that we were a school discussion leaders. For the movement was made to develop our skills in that direction.

Second term started. There of all leaving Victorian and NSW county schools for thirteen odd weeks. One hundred and thirty shows were performed and about thirty workshops taken. Our director worked as well. The work was in all the programme didn't see our work as all. Whether we would be touring and what shows we would be performing in third term was decided upon without our confidence or approval.

As the season drew to a close we requested several ideas to be taken by third term the possibility for actors to spend only a few nights in the country at a time, the possibility to meet our directors more regularly, the possibility of performing less than ten shows a week to allow time for rehearsal, workshoping new actors or planning discussion sessions. The answer, it seemed, was that M.T.C. a school programme would make a financial loss if these were implemented. It seemed tragic that our valuable work couldn't make for these reasons, while our main company was a heavily subsidised theatre. Without such needed input how could we actors keep up stage output at the high level demanded of us?

Personally I felt I couldn't afford my resignation as did a fellow team member. A



Bob Harrison

Photo: M.T.C.

few days following the manager of M.T.C. used to say the contracts of our whole team were terminated. The director of our programme wasn't available to discuss the matter. We left M.T.C. at least with our duty to convey our thoughts and frustrations.

Janya Hayes

CONSTRUCTIVE THEATRE?

Helen van der Poorten

"Children, turn to page 45 of your textbook the teacher said, and the children began to leaf through their books."

"Drop," she yelled suddenly.

The children flung themselves down scrambling under their desks to crouch with heads wrapped in arms hugging close to the floor.

Canberra playwright Roger Pulvers, that describes their politics known as *Drop Drill*, a scenario familiar to himself and to many American children growing up in the post-Hiroshima era of the 50's. From this ritual as common to most schools, Pulvers, comes the name of his Pulvers' new play which opens shortly at the A.N.U. Arts Centre.

The invitation to the gala premiere of *Drop Drill* might seem to come at a time to match the recent peace building, and judging by the size of the Arts Centre as I see it last week the size could be quite striking. A huge hall (now the Australian National University Library) the A.N.U. Arts Centre, has remained unpopular because of University cutbacks in this respect. It is reminiscent of public buildings in bankrupt South American republics, and one wonders how many other buildings in the National Capital have met with a similar fate.

But the Arts Centre is fortunate in having people who care about it, and one of them, Roger Pulvers, approached the University for permission to stage *Drop Drill* so that the proceeds would go towards the completion of the project. It now seems likely that the project will act as a catalyst to the conversion of the Centre, and the Assistant Vice-Chancellor of the A.N.U. the Department of the Capital Territory Pulvers and local director Ralph Wilson have all combined to make the production in the so-called "Theatrical Room" a possibility. The Arts Regulations have been satisfied at last, and with some wiring run through to the Centre from the Crillier Library, it is possible to stage *Drop Drill* before an audience.

The real drama A.N.U. Arts Centre, however, is here and cannot be denied only. Instead with subtle in the moment, with several galleries and a garden amphitheatre representing the most things. It will take \$10,000 of non-existent money to complete the four modules which would transform the space into a stage and even though the A.N.U. people think they can reduce, for instance, electricity costs from \$30,000 to \$5,000 there is still a long way to go.

And what of the play which will help regenerate the building? The publicity handbook classifies *Drop Drill* as a "mixture of drama and comedy" and it is, but it is possibly the most serious of contemporary and slapstick, which permeates the play *Drop*



Drill seems to me as dramatic as the precariousness of life rather than absolute destruction. The producers tell us of the play's action: "A Prime Minister comes to a foreign country on a mission. But she stays on in the country instead of returning home. The people she eventually meets there are as if out of a dream: a little girl who believes in an old man who has spent his life wandering around a dead tree; a young intellectual boy who dreams of being a soldier. But in fact the account of the play can give us no indication of the time-shifts in *Drop Drill*. The Nash-type moments of complete reaction, and the intellectual satires in which, for instance, two politicians conflict and negotiate by playing musical instruments."

The playwright, Roger Pulvers, has schematized the action precisely so that the action, say from November 21 (21st November) 2nd then forward to the following year, and back again. This schema, however, is unavailable to the audience who are to respond to the reverse chronology with the same sense of mystification as the characters in the play. Often the motivating scenes follow the pattern of action, and the playwright has carefully avoided an arrangement which would help an audience understand what is happening in terms of traditional dramatic development.

Roger Pulvers has commented frequently on the difficulty experienced by Western writers in portraying abstract roles so that even in a familiar play we may find actors having to decide for themselves whether they are bushbuck, leavers, or whatever, singular together. In *Drop Drill* it is the question of being a Prime Minister or a grandeur which matters, not the material or grand material roles (false anyway to the play director's idea) which both characters assume momentarily. Pulvers play deliberately plays with our conventions of dramatic development and the dissolution of one scene from another produce a painfully humorous effect. To this and director Ralph Wilson allowed the actors to play to express their roles for a time, then cut them back to the spectators. This non-but not a serious approach should help create the sense of impending doom which the playwright intends.

It then probably given the impression that *Drop Drill* is a highly controlled and rigid play, as the contrary it is a performance in which the actors play, with any symbolism coming from the music and the sound of a slowing down. It is a play about fear, but the playwright seems to have achieved this end without frightening his participants visibly. Hopefully the Canberra audience will recognize in the production of *Drop Drill* exactly the kind of experimental venture which justifies a new Arts Centre.

How do plays come to be done within the College system?

The students work with an all-involvement to teachers of developmental drama in schools. Their role will be to work with kids on the theatre of themselves - helping them to use drama as a means of expressing their own thoughts, feelings and experiences.

What was a play first? Students become involved as part of their course work. There is a unit called 'performance'. So we usually get a fairly heterogeneous group together each time - students who have never acted before, students who wanted to go to NIDA, but couldn't, students whose only intention is to be a good teacher.

And that's your starting point?

Right. The first problem I'm confronted with is to get this group of people to share their similar consciousness in relation to the work we are doing. I find a personality that goes against to the role quite persistent amongst this age group. Their previous experience has often been limited to the English Republics of play produced by High School English teachers and entered an 'in-between' space. They tend to see acting as something separate from themselves. So the initial task is to define theatre as an immediate, relevant expression of their own real lives.

My basic premise is that the only way to create a really 'true' piece of theatre is to build from their personal reference - their own perceptions of the world around them.

Let's talk about your production of *The Rose Across Lake Constantine*. In the light of what you're just said, why did you choose such a complex unusual and enigmatic play?

My job demands that I continually play. I find more and more I feel fewer and fewer excuses. *Constantine* stood out - it affected me strongly. For three years studied in the back office as it is something I'd like to direct. But I hated the conceived of doing it with a student group because it was so complex. Then when the time came to choose a play to do with second year students I thought 'why not?'. My question is simple: such is their effectively explore the notion of power games, relationships, language and other social conventions dealt with in the play? And it was a challenging challenge to the age group to take a lifetime meaningful piece of theatre which a wide range of people could relate to.

What about the metaphysics and politics of *Constantine*? Order, both natural and imposed, identity, religion, superstition, morality, time... were the students wholly aware of and interested in such things?

Most of the students doing this course tend to be pretty naive intellectually. Most of their subjects are non-academic. So their political and philosophical awareness is often nil. Also, given their ages and stages, they have not yet experienced or developed in some of the emotional areas relevant to a play like *Constantine*. So our point was simply the practical value of the basic interaction between people within the play. For them, the play was a raw and intense experience which stimulated the need to articulate what they'd just been through. That's how the political and philosophical implications emerged.

Did the need to work up their such a basic point of departure improve the play's accessibility to students, do you think?

I think it did. Everyone seemed to be affected at a gut level, even if they didn't understand it intellectually or hadn't experienced *Constantine* before. The response was strong and

Emmett

THEATRE OF THEMSELVES

John Smythe
Interviews
Lindy Davies.

Early drama is a feature of students at the Rose College of Victoria at Melbourne. The first year students at the Rose College of Victoria at Melbourne in 1975 and 1976. The Rose College of Victoria at Melbourne is a school of drama and theatre studies. The Rose College of Victoria at Melbourne is a school of drama and theatre studies.



Top: Maria Bode. Above: Rose Across Lake Constantine

Photo: Howard Bennett

immediate - much to my amazement.

I'm not surprised! Your enthusiasm was such that despite the inherent disadvantages of the event as a piece of theatre, your presentation was completely adequate. I'd say the only thing stopping anyone relating to it immediately in terms of their personal ability to play experience in life would have been their own limited preoccupations about what theatre should be.

But back to how you went about achieving this. How did you get about casting the play?

I advertised that the play was going on and all students interested in taking it on in a unit of work attended a meeting (distributed copies of the play and asked them to read it) then came and saw me if they felt any empathy with any one of the roles.

I should point out that Handke did not create characters such as one found in the traditional well made play. He turned the right roles into figures (German variant but right) just as well as called them A.B.C.D. or whatever. They are not just right through pieces for the same reasons. However, each has distinctive qualities, but they are overwhelming naturalism. The actors must bring their own vulnerability and openness to the roles if they are to make the play intelligible. That is why the empathy was so important. But it is significant that each again chose a role that would enable them to explore a part of themselves they'd never before explored.

How did you approach the text?

For me the play is like a symphony. Every work is a reply which is part of a complex pattern. And the whole can be broken up into distinctive movements. Each scene, line, bar or movement can exist separately independent of the others, but each a focus in its own right and the whole adds up to more than the sum of its parts. In other words it is a puzzle and one can keep looking at it, looking at parts within parts.

What part of workshop work did you do?

We had intensive physical and vocal work, each both as a liberating thing and as a means of access to inner thoughts. And we used various exercises and games as a means of finding appropriate words into the play. We played high status territorial imperative and preying animal games in order to explore the nature of power based structures and relationships. And in relation to that we played a game where others would only interact with others if they encountered the truth of what was being said or done to the 10 days or games and strategies were helped to come later on with the notion of time in the play.

We also looked at Pears's theories of projection and introjection both in relation to the play and our own day to day experiences. Observation of the world around us (we had some anecdotes each day) was very important for identifying the delivery of behaviour, language and interaction which Handke consistently questions in the play.

I remember your production making me actually aware for a time at least of my own social games and how they played around me. It actually changed my perception of the world!

This is where Handke succeeds. I think in making his own demand that theatre should show people to action. He once said that language is hypnotizing and Handke shows us how we use language as a way to put on or to get off ourselves and others. Through the play he constantly confronts us with our own manipulations and spaces.

Let's move on to your most recent production

of Manon/Babe.

Yes. We approached that quite differently at first, although the relevance of the play to the students involved was still the basic starting point. Opposition was the major idea we explored. They had an intellectual understanding of opposition of the individual by the state but our model was to develop an emotional awareness of what it stretched. This tended to use the way I represented themselves yet constantly complained about the institution they were trying to operate within.

We had a number of lengthy discussions about the social and philosophical content of the text concentrating on the argument between Dr. Baele and Manon, but I soon realised it wasn't going on anywhere. It was still too remote. So we went straight into the working of the play, studying methods of work which would actually demonstrate how oppression could work in its own way.

The first objective was to release the actors from self imposed oppression. Initially they were given a great deal of permission to work in anyway they liked. And I constantly found that I had to prevent them from judging themselves and each other so that they could accept and use that freedom. In a sense we were liberating children from the judgemental parents within themselves by creating an environment in which they wouldn't be scared of making fools of themselves. This environment became the school, in fact, and the contest personal as the students discovered became the central. So right away we were working within the actual structure of the play. (The full text explains it. The Permission and Liberation of Manon/Babe as Performed by the Amateurs of Chesham Under the Direction of the Marquis De Baele.)

When we were developing the involvement games each individual claimed a part of themselves they had previously recognised their aggression, perhaps or intolerance or love. And they accepted a fully true made them extremely vulnerable to the group but through that process they also learned to take responsibility for their own feelings and attitudes - something some people never do off through life.

Once the scenes were fully developed as distinct stage characters Dr. Baele himself (an intense, cold, no emotion of the most part) in his play a judgemental person who rules. As the director had to become an observer to control the system and age rate as an indicator or guide who recognised that the students had. That way I could keep the rehearsal going at a steady pace and keep them if things weren't working effectively.

About actual exercises we did start each rehearsal with the drumming in a process by which with the aid of drums and music (the forty five performers would chant themselves and adopt their own personas. As they sat about learning the play their system characters would become stronger and more defined.

How successful was this in practice? Give us the very limited theoretical experience most of the year had to what degree were they in fact able to see their own world?

It varied. In the way of working the actors really did a brief state of consciousness and in this state create a character mask. They have agreed upon physical and the mask is then fed these resources. If not the students are still able to create being characters (but their own) and project on others.

How did you feel about that?

To me the most important thing was that the many of them went on a journey somewhere where they understood and experienced another reality so utterly that eventually the audience experienced a bit like it, because its accessibility. I think it is that that sort of performance is the best as opposed to ever lived.

I do understand and accept and value the concern that the Overseas playgroup of participants sometimes means that details of the arguments were ignored. But at the same time it enhanced the statement the play was making. People were busy. I don't understand all the words so-and-so said but he did I felt then.

Would you go about it the same way with a fully professional group?

Yes. I don't believe the same problems would arise in performance with trained actors because they would or should have the basic skills necessary for maintaining that artistic control.

Where would you like to go from here?

I'd like a chance to work with my peers. I'm aware of the advantages of working in the College - excellent facilities and resources, adequate time in which to work on developing projects, the chance to experiment as much as I like. But now I'm finding having to start from scratch with a new group each time a bit daunting, a no doing work in the teaching role a bit reinforcing. For me to really develop much further in this type of work I think I'd need to work with my peers.

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Book CRITICAL CROSSFIRE

Helen van der Poorten

A View of the English Stage by Kenneth Tynan. Paperback. U.K. 1976. Recommended Retail Price: \$5.40.

In a review of *What's a Good Virgin's Worth*, Kenneth Tynan remarks upon the dangers of blasphemy in reviewing popular Broadway plays: their propensity to blaspheme. It is characteristic of his intelligently subjective criticism that he should insist on his righteousness, so, and as a result that book should at least provide a good nostalgic time for all.

It is a collection of reviews and articles written by Tynan between 1944 and 1964, by which time he had become Literary Critic of the National Theatre. *A View of the English Stage* is made up of articles from these previous volumes and provides as comprehensive a view of post-war English theatre as Shaw had done for the 1930's. The title indicates that Tynan, like his illustrious fore Show, asserts the right to make unqualified and committed judgements. And indeed it becomes clear that commitment is the keynote of his writing, as he looks for it in the work of his friends, playwrights and directors.

He is helped by his concernance, which enabled him to sit most Goffard de de. "Intercourse" puppet-master, and to introduce Goffard to the public in two pages. A further detail is obviously Tynan's gift for the acid word, as his expression has that of becoming a trained "sociologist" or, according to Donald Hebb's *Behaviourism* is a voluntary Secretary Field. But it would be wrong to think of Tynan's writing as merely negative, and I was constantly delighted by the breadth of his most vocal taste as he moved on to show from *The White Devils* to *Goodbye and My Fair Lady*.

Most striking throughout is Kenneth Tynan's concern that modern playwrights should submit some kind of commitment to social change hence the prominence of Ibsen and Shaw in all of his concerns. This represents just theatrical social reform is shown up by Tynan's critical philosophy, in which he links theatre closely with politics. Thus he can support Beckett by terming him a "Godfather" and can complain that Terence Rattigan is "the Perseus of the contemporary theatre" - occupied by the old guilt but geographically inhibited towards the progress.

As his article, *The Lost Art of Bad Drama*, shows Tynan declares the justified contents in which intellectuals had English theatre in the early 50's and the turn to the Continent as the alternative to British badness. It is with some embarrassment that he tells of the French girl who complained to him in 1964 that Paris offered nothing in the theatre, apart from *Barbe Noire*, *Comme Cielito*, *Agnes Claudel*, *Beckett* and *Salerno*. But Tynan's objection that Joan Littlewood is merely catching up with the rest of the world with *The Roalds* is later answered as he firmly takes the side of Osborne and Waugh in their

dramatic developments.

To me the most memorable article is his influential attack upon censoring under the title *The Royal Blue Heavens*. It is amazing of course as we read how the Lord Chamberlain preferred the temples of the Media to the beliefs of the Media, but these examples do not disguise Tynan's understandable conviction that the pretence of the censor unscrupulous British playwrights in a casual and tentative parody Kenneth Tynan's role in helping new English playwrights and in seeking restrictive theatrical institutions is proof that good drama need not be just academically objective.

Edited by Jennifer Compton of Muehlen Morris, Currency, Methuen Drama Ltd, 1976. Recommended Retail Price: \$9.00.

Commitment to social change is a meaningful phrase in quite different light presenting drama as ideology. It is my fear that some of Currency-Muehlen's "Documentary Specials" may in this direction as the editors attempt to reach a non-theatrical audience. Their edition of Jennifer Compton's *Creative* contains some of these fears. The play, better known to Sydney and more for its earlier title *No Man's Land*, depicts women caught in the crossfire of unemancipated thinking, and Currency have used this prize-winning drama as the basis for a publication on "The role of women in Australian Society" with historical comment on women's suffrage, status, and the politics of motherhood.

Now to come later the cross period setting of the play (the two represents simultaneously actors in 1910 and 1970) politics. Muehlen Morris' historical introduction, but there are ways in which the links are broken. Jennifer Compton's play shows us the claims of several women trapped in the no-man's land between intellectual enlightenment and instinct. It is unfortunate that Cilla, the character with the most room for dramatic development, is so dominated theatrically by the apparently more vulnerable 1910 Jane and 1970 Mary. We are invited to see the middle class domestic Cilla as somewhat "wired" but all we see reflect a few confusion and she comes off the worse in most encounters with women and men.

But ultimately it is the gear shifting and seeming inconsistency in this play which make it fascinating as characters from the past almost meet their present day "selves" and as they move from such female progress through sophisticated sex chat to involve these changes make for several fine female roles.

But I must say frankly that I found this introductory article "What's Behind the Beasts?" so revealing that I have done all that need less drama. The editorial illustrations from early women's magazines match the scenes of the political in-fighting which led to the female franchise in Australia and the history of employee Petermann which was thought to push together less a first-rate female article finishes with a proof that early Australian feminists espoused the ideology of "motherhood" and leads to a different kind of consideration from that of Jennifer Compton the reading - but on women in Australia does not partly seem clarity and the article on.

The Play in the Theatre is a solid vague and unimpressive in comparison with the historical section. It is symptomatic of the problem with documentary specials that the theatrical section seems out of place, and it is unfortunate that Miss Compton's lively "unpropaganda" piece towards end of place too.

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Ballet

DANCE OF DEATH?

William Shoubridge



The Company at work

Photo: Ballet Victoria

Over the past year, there have been so many upheavals in various ballet and dance companies throughout Australia that one wonders, when the dust finally settles, whether things will ever be the same again.

Late in 1976 the Adelaide-based Australian Dance Theatre was disbanded and its dancers thrown into limbo.

Now British choreographer Jonathan Taylor has come out to reestablish it with a small company of eight dancers. Just what form it will take is still open to conjecture, but it would be safe to predict that with Taylor's history as a performer and choreographer with Ballet Rambert, it will be based on modern dance rather than classical ballet.

Joan Pear, who earlier resigned from co-Artistic Directorship of the Australian Dance Theatre has resigned from the Dance Company (A.D.C.) and returned to Holland.

The Artistic Director of that group is now home grown, showing up as Graeme Murphy.

Anne Williams took over as Artistic Director of the Australian Ballet just in time to get Sir Robert Helpmann was offering to do a close with performances of *The Merry Widow* in London.

Now, almost recently on the same day that the findings of the I.A.C. were announced, it was found that Ballet Victoria had been put into receivership and the company has followed down.

This happened coincidentally just on the twentieth anniversary of the company's foundation (the Victorian Ballet Guild).

Money has since been found by the Victorian Government to keep classes for students going until the end of the year so that they can take their exams, thus avoiding the waste of a whole year's study, but means that dancers, mostly so called non-dancers, will go without work and therefore without income.

As was noted by Gareth Welch, artistic director of the company most of the dancers will go overseas to look for work.

But, considering the renewal of A.D.C. and the audience for new dances for the Dance Company, there will be few opportunities for dancers to join these companies.

The Victorian Ballet was an extremely well drilled, technically proficient body of dancers. They were always trying to extend both their range and the appreciation of their audiences towards a greater understanding of the many threads within the term, 'dance'.

Even on the closing of this company was announced, they were embarking on a tour of Victorian schools, taking a production of *Peter and the Wolf* to approximately three thousand schoolchildren.

Gareth Welch has since said that he will attempt to start up another company.

Whether the Victorian Government and the approached, banking firms will have enough left in hand to fund the venture has yet to be seen.

The question is, how did the Company manage to lose so much money?

Well, aside from the fact that (as the I.A.C. gleefully informs us) ballet, opera and theatre are always losing money on a costly support-income basis, Ballet Victoria was always touring extensively throughout the nation. Because they weren't widely known, audiences tended to ignore them and as they felt that in order to attract audiences they needed to export overseas, sales

it was an enormous coup for them to obtain the services of those two, recently defunct superstars, Mariela Mercurio and Michael Maraforis for last year's tour of *Gianni Schicchi*.

It was even more of a coup to get Gilda and

Valery Panov to tour with them in a full scale production of Bolshoi's *Petrushka*.

Bolshoi Victoria, faced with the production, to make a profit or losses which had amounted to almost \$300,000 instead they ended up with a loss, somewhat in the region of \$300,000.

Why was the Panov tour such a financial fiasco while still being an artistic triumph? Well, things became a little clearer when the final cost of the venture is considered.

In the first place they had to pay the services of the Panovs and fly them out here, transport money.

In mounting the production, they were helped no end by expert tutor Sergei Golovine who has had a long association with Petrushka, having learned some of the details from Bronislava Nijinsky, a star of the Bolshoi's performers in the title role. Valery Nijinsky (his son) can't buy the services of someone like Golovine for nothing.

He and his wife and the company were also refugees of what Bolshoi had designated for Dzhigalov's *Ballet Rhapsody* back in 1991, one can imagine the cost of rescheduling the designs and rescheduling them.

In the usual Bolshoi way, two copies had to be made. While the company was performing in one city or site, another was being brought to the next city, so tight was the schedule.

In every city the company performed an extra had to be hired for the crowd, planned that cost money. Principals, dancers and orchestra had to be flown from one city to the next. Cities included in the itinerary were Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane, Newcastle, Canberra, Adelaide, Hobart, Auckland, Wellington and Christchurch.

As if this wasn't enough, publicity costs

must have been enormous. Admittedly the public had to know that Petrushka was being performed, that it was a masterpiece of dance theatre and that the Panovs were touring in it etc. etc. Bolshoi's reputation in Australia had never been this high before and the majority of audiences would have had a clue what was about.

Still and all, every paper in the country carried huge advertisements of the production for almost two months before the tour began.

In the week before the opening of the tour there was a four full page supplement in *The Australian* about the company and the sales staff they reportedly cost about \$12,000.

Personally, I think a lot of the money that went into this grandiose saturation point advertising would have been more constructively used in the production itself, especially in engaging an orchestra that could at least play together and obtaining more rehearsal time for the company in each capital city.

Still, one can't say ever said with The company worked hard and with dedicated enthusiasm but their enthusiasm apparently wasn't shared by the audience.

The whole tour was a brave, ambitious attempt Bolshoi ran their feeling that it was a little stupid as well. The Australian Ballet would never tackle it even with their larger resources, and Michael Edgley's attractions have always played safe using a company like the Bolshoi, a performer like Nijinsky or a ballet like *The Sleeping Beauty* to get the audience on.

It remains to be seen whether the Bolshoi will rise phoenix like out of its ashes. It will need some philanthropic businessmen to take them out of receivership and pay their

debts and perhaps a special Australia Council grant to get them back on their feet.

In these gloomy pinching times, the prospect recedes further into the distance as the page by.

In the meantime, Garth Welch, the administrator staff and the dancers are without an income and those students once they have finished their exams at the end of this year, face a very dismal future ahead.



Valery Panov



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Opera

LONG SHADOW OF G & S

David Gyger

The Gilbert and Sullivan operettas cast a far longer shadow over the English-speaking world, perhaps, than their Italian ones, yet perhaps, but it is easy to see why. Scarcely a schoolboy in Britain, Australia or America can have escaped the operetta, happily unwilling, to an amateur production no matter how unsophisticated, at leastening to G&S in later life has something of the flavor of renewing an acquaintance with an old friend.

Both of mine of the lyric and much of the dialogue sound archaic to modern ears, and much of the humor in a piece like *Patience* whose romantic lead is a young mortal above the usual and a fairy from their down stairs from a double entendre that would no doubt have shocked Victorian morality to the quick. Even if most of the plots contain moments as improbable as, even if a fair proportion of the

music is unrequited compared say to the champagne brilliance of the roughly contemporary *Giulietta* scores from across the English Channel.

Even one like myself who is not exactly a G&S addict must concede that their operettas have incredible resonance, particularly to audiences at the hands of insensitive musicians and unskilled actors: indeed, there is so much built-in send-up of the pretence and absurdity of it, common to all countries, that high school G&S has a special charm, whereas adolescent productions, say of the more sentimental American musicals usually fall flat on their faces. I have a good friend who even goes so far as to insist that high school G&S is the only G&S worth seeing and refuses to patronize any other.

She has a point, but there is much more to be

got out of G&S than high school actors/singers can manage, professionally sung, some of the romantic songs are quite enchanting, the patter song roles require a singing actor of formidable talent, able not only to sing out the tongue-twisting lyrics at the speed of light and make them comprehensible, but to take their spoken dialogue dropping innuendo, sarcasm, even self send-up, choruses are not only required to sing, but must be capable comic actors if the big set pieces are not to die of visual boredom. The ultimate G&S actor, then, is made up of opera-quality singers who are also top notch comic actors able to turn off the sentimentality of genuine sentimentality now and then. But since such idealists seldom exist in the real world, we must make do with something less.

On the record front, the comparison is easy to make: highlighted in the official record compare is D. O'Leary's recording, where no mistake of the fact is lost that the singing is distinctly second-rate, with the best of the songs produced by well-known opera singers who all too often seem to be eternally unaware of what G&S is all about.

In the live theatre, the difficulty is just as easy to experience though not always so clearly split out as it has been in Sydney in the past few weeks. On the one hand the Australian Opera, less than a couple weeks after closing down the curtain on an enormous tour and a half a month season of legitimate opera at the Sydney Opera House, rang up the same curtain on a six-week G&S season. As another, the Gilbert and Sullivan Society presented a semi staged production of *The Sorcerer*, on a third the Eastern Suburbs Musical Society presented *The Gondoliers* in an unapologetic inner-city hall.

The *Gondoliers* was a barefoot fair-weather quality adult amateur G&S production after exceedingly bad or some tugging good it was particularly interesting as both productions are intended to be, for the presence of a talented young patter song exponent in the person of Neil Litchfield whose Duke of Plaza Toro was very well sung if not quite up to speed and promisingly solid Conductor Kenneth Webster got some nice sounds out of a small but competent orchestra, despite the snarl of compulsive gibberish in the audience belly, once and for all, the halved proceeds of the *Opera House* do audiences that no guilt whatever about a wrong left and clapping gaily through overtures, dialogue and even half-finished *Griffin* Tarts Don Adriano and Shirley Williams, Duchess of Plaza Toro's otherwise most of the season.

The G&S Society's *Sorcerer* comprised the second half of a program whose other half is last year's production, despite some posturing, for its cynical presentation. In its production of *The Sorcerer*, Brian Phillips meant that it should be such and through the admirable use he made of the subterranean recording hall as the *Opera House*. Using piano accompaniment, only a bare minimum of props, and capitalizing on the inherent theatricality of the hall through ingenious lighting and deployment of some of the actors as the promenade which surrounded the hall he proved once again that effective opera, like any other effective live, need not necessarily depend on lavish sets and stars.

The usual G&S Society principles were out in force, doing everything the traditional way, with the odd variation of set that is as elegant as not being musically catatonic as a result into account but getting the message across with



Debra Dixon (Loretta Chatter) and Heather Sage (Fanny Green) in *Patience*

Photo: J. G.

emotional good humor. Robert Hawthrey was a true Jesuit. Mary Blake in her usual formidable form as the dignified John Wirth (Lingard) and Roslyn Dawson in the form as the immortal Leahy. Gordon and Patrick Donnelly and Betty Munson were good in supporting roles. All that was missing for the ideal in G&S was beautiful singing.

Which brings us back to the A.O. a G&S season topside at the Opera House where H.M.S. Potemkin was launched under John Weeks following concert sales on Friday (October 18) and just about four hundred before his voyage had even got underway under Sir Gilbert and Sullivan with the professional triumph of the A.O. a production brochure in large elegant letters even down in the celebration print, but in a quite clear on opening night that the label from Jerusalem and Moscow which the company had been performing on the same stage just five days earlier, to the quaterdeck of a British frigate was simply too much for the company to accommodate in less than a week.

Even the thoughtless polished performance of Dennis Olsen as St. Joseph Porter, R.C.B. could not rescue the evening from dangerous confusion with freedom. For even the purely musical company must at this stage to have been able to sing and to have performed at least one other role much of the solo singing before just too much of the effort with downright technicality.

By the Australian Mainland side more than a week later things had improved enormously everything was lighter musically and most of the principals had added life and conviction to their singing and spoken dialogue alike. Nowhere was the improvement more striking than in the performance of June Blumenthal as Josephine, even as a personal note to realize the thought immediately she was making her G&S debut had not passed the subtlest of the art form by opening by the marriage she was speaking in her dialogue singing beautifully and had reassured the G&S singing style as though she had been doing it all her life.

Reine Resbeck's Barbara was fuller of voice and much high drama as required. Another Australian performer as the waitress here harmonized. John Phelan's captain had full dramatic thrust, not too bright character if ought to be. Robert Blake's Dick Deadeys was more comically sinister. Coral Coad's Bill Sabotary a little closer of its own.

The other offering of the season, *Amleth* was also lacking polish and life at opening but it was clear even then that Miss Beulah's Phyllis, aided by a fine Simon from Lyndale, Tennant, was not going to be the problem her Josephine was at first. Heather Bagg's Queen of the Palace was strong but not quite strong enough either vocally or in stage presence neither Ronald Macpherson nor particularly Graham Owen made as much of Macbeth and Toller as they could have. Rosemary Gunn's Isabella, seeming to suffer not so much from being wrongly produced as from not being produced at all made little impact even in what ought to be the strongly dramatic moments when she is pleading with the Lord Chancellor.

But Alan Light's Private Verity was magnificently acted and marvellously rich of vocal sound, his strength was a very big but he makes the absolute most of his material. And it goes almost without saying that Olsen was an excellent choice as the Lord Chancellor when had been as St. Joseph Porter, throwing into higher relief his role in G&S as a character of the



Sister Amelita. Photo: George McEwen

Australian Opera, even if just listening to now and then, one does get the feeling he is having to force himself to forget that the ten thousandth time he has performed this particular role and remember that everything must soon absolutely disappear.

Sydney's one new beginning is a program of two thirds of Puccini's *Tosca* at the Conservatorium of Music University. If *Amleth* was omitted and not *Sister Amelita* which is generally conceded to be the weaker, not to mention the suspect if these play even of Puccini was particularly enhanced of it is a great, but Amelita was clearly an extremely choice for the Core because of its virtually all female cast.

Justin Macdonnell's production and Pierre St. Just's set design did most of what could be done with the place with a few simple lines and those removed by the limited stage facilities available and the difficult architectural nature of the end wall was quite well handled indeed. The ensemble singing and acting was very good, but without exception the girls seemed to suffer from acute stage fright when they had to sing on their own. Even Heather Gredson in the role suffered from this problem, though she sang well when she could be heard, only Sandra Kahn as the Princess was not guilty on this point. For the reason here was far and away the outstanding part for music of the opera.

The *Gunn's Schenck* which completed the program was another matter; altogether the students took to this with all the grace of a comic opera, which ranks among the very best of vintage Puccini, like *La Traviata*. Their ensemble work was excellent, no doubt about considerably by Ronald Jackson's direction and an even more successful use from St. Just and there were several fine individual performances, led by Roger Howell's excellent Schenck, which seemed to inspire a good deal of confidence in his colleagues.

Angela Denning was an excellent Lauretta and Marie Alphon (Puccini) displayed a good presence and what could develop into an outstanding career even though his major role must (perhaps) need to waste when a disturbance in the audience obviously distracted him during the orchestral prelude.



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